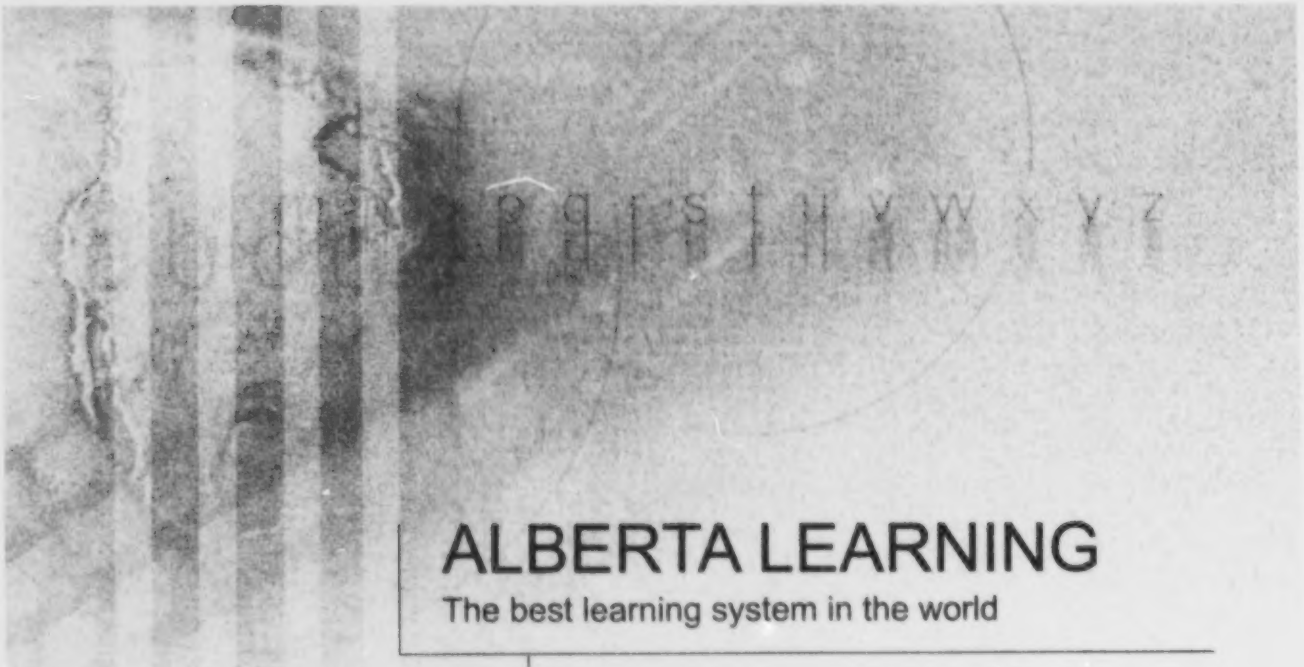

# ALBERTA LEARNING

The best learning system in the world

# Results Report 2003/2004

Alberta
LEARNING

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The *Results Report on Alberta's Learning System, 2003/2004* is an excerpt from Alberta Learning's *Annual Report, 2003/2004*. It replicates the Results Analysis section exactly as it appears in the Annual Report, and is produced for wider dissemination of performance information to the learning system and the public. In addition to the information in this *Results Report,* the *Annual Report* contains an Operational Overview of the Ministry, Ministry Financial Information, Summaries of the financial statements of public school authorities and post-secondary institutions, and Disclosure of Salaries and Benefits for Superintendent and Post-Secondary President Positions.

Extracts from this report are available on the Internet at www.learning.gov.ab.ca.

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# 1. To the Reader

The *Results Report 2003/2004* is an excerpt from Alberta Learning's *Annual Report, 2003/2004*. It replicates the Results Analysis section exactly as it appears in the Annual Report, and is produced for wider dissemination of performance information to the learning system and the public.

In addition to the information in this *Results Report*, the *Annual Report* contains an Operational Overview of the Ministry, Ministry Financial Information, Summaries of the financial statements of public school authorities and post-secondary institutions, and Disclosure of Salaries and Benefits for Superintendent Positions. The Annual Report is available online at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/annualreport/.

The performance information contained in this Results Report will be used in the preparation of Alberta Learning's next three-year plan. All those involved in the learning system are encouraged to use this information to plan improvements for learners in their organization.

# 2. Minister's Message

I am pleased to present Alberta Learning's 2003/04 Annual Report. The report highlights the department's strategies and outcomes that create an outstanding learning system for all Albertans.

This past year, the Government of Alberta released its 20-year strategic plan. Learning is integral to each of the plan's four pillars, which highlights the importance of our learning system in ensuring prosperity and high quality of life for Albertans. The *Leading in Learning* pillar in particular recognizes learning as a key driver of the success of Albertans and our province.

Alberta's Commission on Learning confirmed that the province already has an excellent basic education system, but that we must continue to build on our success to meet the changing needs of learners, society and the economy. Government responded by accepting the vast majority of the 95 recommendations, including class size guidelines and additional funding for hiring more teachers. Many of the commission's recommendations support work that was already underway within government and among school jurisdictions. The department is currently working with stakeholders to implement the recommendations that were accepted.

One of the department's important achievements this past year was the development of the second-language learning programs of study, implementation guides and resources. Beginning in 2006/07, Alberta students in grades four through nine will be required to study one of a variety of languages. Not only will learning a second language give Alberta students a competitive edge in the job market, it will help them develop their overall literacy skills.

In 2003/04, the department focused resources on the development of a daily physical activity initiative and the redevelopment of the social studies curriculum. Daily physical activity will be phased in over three years, and will increase student activity levels and healthy behaviours. The new social studies program will be launched in 2005, with an increased focus on Canadian and Alberta history, citizenship, and aboriginal culture and perspectives.

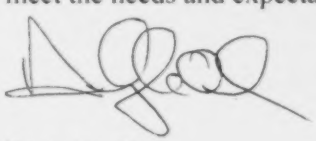
Another outstanding accomplishment this year was the proclamation of the *Post-secondary Learning Act, 2003*. This new legislation further supports the principles of Campus Alberta – enhancing a system that is accessible, flexible and responsive regardless of where a student chooses to learn. It defines the future of our post-secondary system, providing students with increased access to opportunities to complete degrees and greater flexibility for institutions to respond to student needs.

Our apprenticeship training programs play an increasingly important role in meeting the demands of the Alberta economy. In 2003/04, we responded to industry needs by providing additional funding to enhance programs and increase technical training classes to meet the need for skilled tradespeople.

In cooperation with the federal government, we launched two joint initiatives to attract more foreign students to Alberta and to extend existing measures to draw more skilled immigrants to the province. As well, the department worked with over 40 stakeholders to develop a strategic framework for integrating skilled immigrants into our economy.

Alberta continues to be recognized as a world leader because of the success of our learning system. This past year the department was invited to share our expertise with a number of European countries that are reviewing their education systems. We also continue to collaborate with countries that are using Alberta's expertise in apprenticeship and industry training to model their own programs.

*Leading in Learning* means providing Albertans with the opportunities they need to develop new knowledge and skills. Albertans know that in addition to helping them achieve their personal goals, education is important to the success of our province. Our continued commitment to having the best learning system in the world leaves us well positioned to meet the needs and expectations of Albertans.



Dr. Lyle Oberg
Minister of Learning

# 3. Introduction

In 2003/04, Alberta Learning continued to build on its strong foundation to provide the best possible lifelong learning system for Alberta.

Alberta Learning's vision, mission, principles and values define the Ministry. Together, the Ministry's vision and mission present Alberta's view of the future for learning and how it will be realized. The principles identify the Ministry's approach to conducting its business, and the values demonstrate the beliefs or traits that guide Ministry actions.

In 2003/04, the Ministry's vision was renewed and restated while the mission, principles and values were re-confirmed.

**Vision**:

The best learning system in the world.

**Mission**:

Alberta Learning, through its leadership and work with stakeholders, ensures that learners are prepared for lifelong learning, work and citizenship so they are able to contribute to a democratic, knowledge-based and prosperous society.

**Principles**:

**Learner Centred** – The lifelong learning system is focused on the learner.
**Accessible** – Albertans have access to affordable, quality learning opportunities.
**Collaborative** – Learning is a lifelong human endeavor that best occurs when partners and stakeholders work together to provide a holistic approach and a supportive environment.
**Accountable** – The learning system is accountable to Albertans for quality results, system sustainability, and fiscal responsibility.
**Responsive** – The learning system is flexible and meets and anticipates learner needs.
**Innovative** – The learning system demonstrates leading edge innovation for improved results.
**Equitable** – Albertans have equitable access to lifelong learning opportunities.

**Values**:
Respect, Integrity, Trust, Openness and Caring.

The Ministry continues to play a key role in promoting Cross-ministry Initiatives. These are priorities established by the provincial government each year that transcend the mandate of individual Ministries. Alberta Learning contributed to government's priority policy initiatives:

- Health Sustainability Initiative
- Aboriginal Policy Initiative
- Economic Development Strategy
- Alberta Children and Youth Initiative.

The Ministry also contributed to the key administrative priorities:

- Alberta Corporate Service Centre (ACSC)
- Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy
- Corporate Information Management/ Information Technology Strategy
- Service Alberta Initiative.

The Ministry worked with our partners on a number of these Cross-ministry Initiatives, and in particular co-led work on the Economic Development Strategy and the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative.

In 2003/04, Alberta Learning maintained its emphasis on the achievement of results. To focus the learning system's efforts more effectively, the goals were consolidated from five to three in the 2003-06 Business Plan. The Ministry's performance and accomplishments are provided on the pages that follow, organized by the three goals of the 2003-06 Business Plan:

- High Quality Learning Opportunities for All
- Excellence in Learner Outcomes
- Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry.

Ministry performance for 2003/04 is highlighted on page 5. Performance results are presented in more detail in the Results Analysis section starting on page 9, including factors affecting performance. The Ministry's accomplishments for the year are highlighted on pages 6-7 and summarized in Section 6, starting on page 41. Ministry spending is highlighted on page 8 and described in more detail starting on page 32.

Opportunities and challenges are discussed in Looking Ahead, starting on page 38.

# 4. Highlights

## Performance at a Glance

2003/04 Ministry core measures performance is compared to results for the base year, which is over five years, or for new measures, the first year data are available. Results are summarized below and presented in more detail in the Results Analysis (pages 10-30). Targets are considered met if the result is within 95% of the target value, except for provincial achievement tests, whose targets are considered met if the result is within 0.4% of the target. The confidence interval is taken into account in assessing change over time on survey measures (see Endnotes A and B on pages 51-56 for a more detailed explanation of target assessment and use of confidence intervals). Unless otherwise noted, targets are for 2003/04.

| Outcomes | Core Measures Results |
|---|---|
| **Goal One: High Quality Learning Opportunities for All** | |
| The learning system meets the needs of all learners, society, and the economy. | √ Public satisfaction with the overall quality of basic education increased to 71%.<br>√ The percentage of recent apprenticeship graduates satisfied with their on-the-job training increased to 93%.* (Biennial survey last conducted in 2002/03.)<br>√ The percentage of recent apprenticeship graduates satisfied with their technical training increased to 95%.* (Biennial survey last conducted in 2002/03.)<br>√ 79% of recent post-secondary graduates are satisfied with the overall quality of their education. |
| All Albertans can participate in quality learning. | = A substantial majority (72%) of the public remains satisfied that most adults have access to the education or training they want.* |
| The learning system is affordable. Financial need is not a barrier to learners participating in learning opportunities. | ↓ 50% of the public agrees that the learning system is within the means of most Albertans. |
| **Goal Two: Excellence in Learner Outcomes** | |
| Learners demonstrate high standards. | √ Overall results at the standard of excellence on provincial achievement tests reached 19.6% for all students and 21.7% for students writing.<br>↑ Overall results at the acceptable level on achievement tests for students writing improved over time, reaching 85.6% in 2002/03 (overall results in 2003/04 are not comparable to prior years).<br>↓ Overall results at the acceptable level on achievement tests for all students in grade declined from 77.6% 1999/2000 to 76.8% in 2002/03 (overall results in 2003/04 are not comparable to prior years).<br>↑ Students achieved provincial expectations on a larger portion of diploma examinations in 2002/03 and 2003/04 than in prior years.* |
| Learners complete programs. | √ The high school completion rate within 5 years of entering grade 10 rose to 75%.<br>√ The percentage of apprentices completing programs increased to 76%.<br>↓ A majority of Alberta post-secondary students complete their programs: 61% for universities and 59% for colleges and technical institutes.**<br>√ High school completion of Alberta 25-34 year-olds remains high at 89%.<br>√ The percentage of Alberta 25-34 year-olds who complete post-secondary programs increased to 57%. |
| Learners are well prepared for lifelong learning. | ↑ The percentage of students who participated in Early Childhood Services programs prior to Grade 1 increased to 96%.**<br>√ The percentage of the public who are satisfied that adult learners are well prepared for lifelong learning increased to 77%. |
| Learners are well prepared for employment. | ↑ The employment rate of Alberta high school graduates aged 25-34 rose to 84%.*<br>= The employment rate of Albertans aged 25-34 who completed post-secondary certificate/diploma programs remains high at 86%.*<br>= The employment rate of Albertans aged 25-34 with a university degree is high and stable at 88%.* |
| Learners are well prepared for citizenship. | √ Public satisfaction that high school students are well prepared for citizenship rose to 61%.<br>√ The percentage of the public satisfied that adult learners are prepared for citizenship has increased to 66%. |
| **Goal Three: Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry** | |
| Improved results through effective working relationships on Cross-ministry Initiatives and with stakeholders. | √ The percentage of cross-ministry partners and learning system stakeholders who agree that Alberta Learning staff are collaborative has increased to 89%. |
| The Ministry demonstrates leadership and continuous improvement. | √ The percentage of partners and stakeholders who agree that Alberta Learning staff are responsive and flexible has risen to 87%. |

Target Met: √ Target Not Met or No Target: Improved results: ↑ No change: = Performance decline: ↓

* No target set for 2003/04. ** Proxy measure, no target set.

# Highlights: Key Accomplishments

## Goal 1: High Quality Learning Opportunities for All

- Introduced Bill 25, the *School Amendment Act* and Bill 26, the *Teaching Profession Amendment Act*, the government's response to recommendations of Alberta's Commission on Learning related to the teaching profession.
- Passed and proclaimed Bill 43, the *Post-secondary Learning Act* 2003, combining and updating the *Universities Act*, the *Colleges Act*, the *Technical Institutes Act* and the *Banff Centre Act*, to improve access to post-secondary degree opportunities.
- Completed consultations and established regulations for the Campus Alberta Quality Council, which will facilitate the development and expansion of degree-granting opportunities for learners.
- Accepted the vast majority of the 95 recommendations in the Alberta Commission on Learning report on the K-12 system, and developed implementation plans for the accepted recommendations.
- Enhanced on-line access to post-secondary education and created spaces for 692 more students at Alberta's post-secondary institutions in the fields of health sciences, Aboriginal teaching, and management, through a $30 million increase to the Access Fund.
- In response to industry needs, provided $20 million to post-secondary technical training providers to maintain an additional 5,780 apprenticeship spaces and enhance technical training equipment and facilities.
- In consultation with over 40 stakeholders, developed a strategic framework for integrating skilled immigrants into the Alberta economy.
- Added an additional 400 nominations for skilled immigrants to the Provincial Nominee Program, allowing Alberta to nominate a total of 800 candidates over the course of the agreement.
- Collaborated with representatives from Bermuda's government and industry to help them develop a national certification system based on Alberta's apprenticeship and industry training model.
- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Energy Skills Centre Trinidad and Tobago to formalize the relationship with Alberta Learning with respect to the development of industry standards and training and certification for worker mobility.
- Signed Memoranda of Understanding with Saxony (Germany), Denmark, Vietnam and China to assist in enhancing their learning systems.
- Launched a pilot project to fast-track the processing of study permit applications and attract more international students to Alberta.
- Implemented strategies to address the goals of the Renewed Vision for the K-12 Curriculum, focusing on areas relating to primary programs (K-3), daily physical activity, second language learning and Individualized Learning Career Pathways.
- Approved a new language initiative to make learning a second language a requirement for students in Grades 4 to 9. Beginning in 2006/07, Alberta students in Grades 4 to 9 will study one of Chinese, Cree, French, German, Japanese, Punjabi, Spanish or Ukrainian.
- Held consultations with over 400 stakeholders on the Daily Physical Activity Initiative, which will be phased in over 3 years to increase student activity levels and healthy behaviours, with mandatory implementation for Grades 1-9 in September 2005 and for high school in September 2006.
- Initiated a collaborative exchange relationship between Alberta and the state of Jalisco, Mexico to support second language learning.
- Redeveloped the social studies curriculum, with an increased focus on Canadian and Albertan history, citizenship, and First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures. The revised curriculum will be implemented beginning in 2005 with Kindergarten to Grade 3.
- Enhanced the web interface of the Science 9 e-text in response to feedback from teachers, students and parents.
- Trained 57 additional school teams and 88 coaches in using the Effective Behaviour Supports (EBS) process for a total of 249 school teams and 121 coaches since the introduction of EBS in 2001/02.
- Updated the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement Clearinghouse website with a series of new promising practices from school jurisdictions.
- Invested an additional $20 million to support pre-school and Kindergarten children with special needs, to accommodate the increased number of students returning to complete or upgrade Grade 12 and to provide educational supports for students in institutional programs such as group homes and treatment centres for youth.
- Renewed a five-year Memorandum of Agreement with the five teacher preparation institutions in Alberta under the Memorandum of Agreement, deans confirm to the Minister that graduates have the required knowledge, skills and attributes for interim certification.
- Implemented Technology Standards and Solutions: established standards for videoconferencing.
- Developed the Content Delivery Device to support learning system use of LearnAlberta.ca.
- Began implementing outcomes and measures for the K-12 learning system as defined by the Review Committee on Outcomes in provincial surveys of parents, high school students, teachers and the public.
- Released high school dropout and returning rates to school jurisdictions and the public for the first time.
- Completed draft tests for field validation of the Grade 9 Integrated Occupational Program.
- In response to stakeholder expectations for a written component in all diploma examinations, re-designed the Mathematics and Science diploma examinations to include a separate written response portion.
- Began implementing a methodology to ensure diploma examinations are comparable from year to year, starting with Social Studies.
- Launched the Beyond MIRS (Management Information Reporting Schedules) Pilot Project with six school boards to assess the usefulness of grade level achievement data for program evaluation at the classroom, school, jurisdictional and provincial levels.

## Goal 2: Excellence in Learner Outcomes

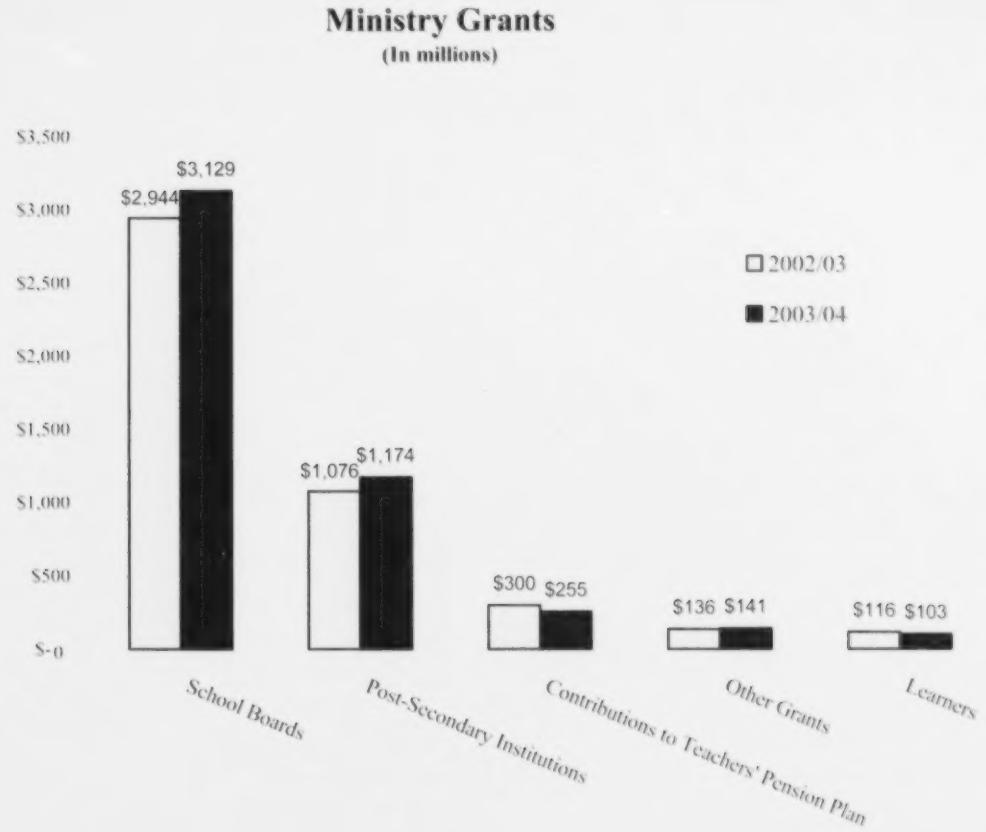
- Passed Bill 1, the *Alberta Centennial Education Savings Plan Act*, which sets the stage for a new program to encourage parents to open a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) for their children with a $500 per child investment from government, as of January 1, 2005.
- Continued to infuse the Aboriginal perspective into English Language Arts, Health/CALM/Physical Education, Mathematics, and Science programs.
- Supported the implementation of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit School-Community Learning Environment Project with 16 pilot school jurisdictions to improve the success of FNMI learners attending provincial schools by increasing attendance, retention, achievement and high school completion.

- Developed the Student Guide for Aboriginal People and the Guide for Counsellors and Educators and distributed them to more than 1,346 schools and counseling centers.
- Provided over $22.2 million in scholarships from the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund to over 10,600 students, an increase of over 5% from the previous year.
- Issued over $14.9 million in Achievement Scholarships to over 12,700 Alberta post-secondary students, an increase of over 10% from last year.
- Provided approximately $84.4 million in loan relief benefits and completion payments to reduce student debt levels.
- Awarded $10 million in Performance Envelope funding to 24 post-secondary institutions in recognition of outstanding performance in areas such as graduate employment and satisfaction, increasing accessibility, reducing administration expenditures and generating enterprise revenue.
- Established a new Tuition Fee Policy to ensure predictable and manageable tuition fee increases at post-secondary institutions.
- Completed 89% of the 66 recommendations identified in the three-year Special Education Review Implementation Plan.
- Recognized and rewarded 50 of Alberta's Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) students with $1,000 Scholarships.
- Awarded Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Scholarships (valued at $1,000 each) to 168 apprentices.
- Implemented an Apprenticeship Tuition Fee Policy and monitoring system to ensure that technical training costs are predictable and manageable for apprentices while at the same time maintaining high quality and up-to-date training.
- Generated 71% of Interprovincial Standards (Red Seal) examinations through the apprenticeship Interprovincial Computerized Examination Management System (ICEMS), which improves the efficiency of Red Seal trade examinations across Canada.
- Provided interprovincial mobility for tradespersons by issuing trade certificates with Red Seals to 3,828 completing apprentices, an increase of 5% over the previous year.
- Worked with learning stakeholders, industry and Aboriginal organizations to increase Aboriginal awareness and participation in the apprenticeship and industry training system. As of March 30, 2004 there were 688 registered Aboriginal apprentices.
- Signed an agreement with the Northwest Territories to provide evaluation services to individuals with international educational credentials.
- Supported community programs which helped 48,316 participants address a personal learning goal, or work to improve their basic literacy, English as a second language or employability skills through Community Adult Learning Councils and volunteer tutor adult literacy programs.
- Expanded access to learning opportunities in rural communities, through Community Adult Learning Council Initiatives, resulting in an additional 6,359 participants in 491 learning opportunities.
- Engaged over 6,500 parents and over 7,000 preschool children in family literacy activities through 53 projects of the Parent-Child Literacy Strategy.
- Developed the methodology for a high school to post-secondary transition rate as a new core measure for the 2004-07 Business Plan.

### Goal 3: A Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry

- Acted on the recommendations of Alberta's Commission on Learning by providing $37 million for increases in funding for students with severe special needs, a return to credit-based funding for Grade 10 students, and other costs identified by the Commission.
- Led and supported activities to promote standardization, recognition and mobility of trades across Canada through the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA), Interprovincial Alliance of Apprenticeship Board Chairs (IPA), the Interprovincial Computerized Examinations Management System (ICEMS) and the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF).
- Consulted with stakeholders on the development of the funding profiles and the Accountability Pillar to set the stage for implementing the Renewed Funding Framework.
- Launched the Accountability Pillar for the K-12 system, including provincial surveys of school board members, Grade 4, 7 and 10 students and their parents and teachers. In total more than 270,000 surveys were distributed.
- Developed the Rutherford Scholarship measure for school jurisdictions as part of the Accountability Pillar.
- Supported government Cross-ministry Initiatives, providing a leadership role in the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative and the Economic Development Strategy and making value added contributions to the Health Sustainability Initiative, Aboriginal Policy Initiative, Service Alberta, Information Technology Strategy, Alberta Corporate Service Centre and the Human Resource Development Strategy.
- Worked with the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA) to raise parental awareness about planning for post-secondary studies.
- Processed over 144,000 applications for student loans, scholarships and loan relief payments, an increase of 15.7% applicants.
- Launched the inaugural year of the Student Funding Contact Centre in collaboration with Alberta Human Resources and Employment, to provide information and support about financial assistance programs for further education and training.
- Developed recommendations in collaboration with the federal government and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) for improvements to student financial assistance, promoting accessible and affordable post-secondary education.
- Worked in collaboration with other provincial and territorial ministries on the Pan-Canadian Online Learning Portal, which was officially launched by the CMEC. Approval was given by Ministers to fund further work on the portal.
- Led a collaborative initiative of the CMEC to develop a Pan-Canadian broadband connectivity plan and to introduce the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program as a replacement for the School Achievement Indicators Program.
- Provided $30 million to post-secondary institutions in one-time operations and maintenance funds.
- Worked with industry partners and other government departments to forecast employment demand and supply in the trades.
- Started collaborations with the Construction Sector Council and other partners to develop construction supply and demand information regionally and across the country.
- Approved the cross-ministry *Policy Framework for Services for Children and Youth with Special and Complex Needs and their Families*. Provided cross-sector and ministry orientation sessions on the *Framework and Information Sharing Guideline* to over 400 participants.

# Financial Highlights




Grants account for 94% of the Ministry's expenses and are categorized as follows:

Grants to School Boards include instruction grants, as well as support for Early Childhood Services, Student Health Initiative, and Provincial Initiatives, specifically the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement.

Support to Post-secondary Institutions includes operating grants and grants to improve the accessibility of post-secondary learning.

Contributions to the Teachers' Pension Plan include grants for both current and past service. These grants are lower this year due to a one-time pension contribution on behalf of teachers in 2002/03 towards the unfunded pension liability.

Other Grants include financial assistance to private schools for Early Childhood Services and Grades 1-12 instruction, as well as grants to other areas including community education and learning television.

Grants to Learners consist of funding to post-secondary students based on achievement and need, including scholarships and maintenance grants. As the Ministry implemented automatic remission for student loans, a reduction in the liability for student loans issued resulted in a reduction in overall costs.

# 5. Results Analysis

Alberta's knowledge-based economy requires innovative, well-educated, skilled and adaptable citizens. This is reflected in Alberta Learning's new vision: the best learning system in the world. The department, through its leadership and work with stakeholders and partners, will ensure that Albertans are prepared for lifelong learning, work and citizenship as contributing members of society.

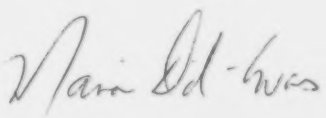
A main focus in 2003/04 for the basic learning system was the development of the three pillars of the Renewed Funding Framework: formulas, flexibility and accountability. As part of the Accountability Pillar, the department began implementing the outcomes and measures for the Kindergarten to Grade 12 learning system developed by the Review Committee on Outcomes. In launching the Accountability Pillar, more than 270,000 students, parents, teachers and administrators were surveyed. In addition, jurisdiction funding profiles were developed for the Formula Pillar to enable school jurisdictions to address the unique needs and circumstances of their communities.

Alberta Learning's results reflect ongoing improvement. In 2003/04, we improved or met targets on many performance measures. For the first time, public satisfaction with the basic education system exceeded 70%. As well, satisfaction levels of post-secondary graduates and employers remain high. Our high school completion rate continues to increase, and a high percentage of partners and stakeholders agree that department staff are collaborative, responsive and flexible.

A number of initiatives during the year supported the educational success of Albertans. The Ministry implemented the First Nations, Métis and Inuit School Community Learning Environment Project in 16 pilot jurisdictions, and through our work on the Aboriginal Policy Initiative, we are integrating Aboriginal historical, cultural and spiritual content into a revised social studies program for Grades K-12. The Ministry continues to play a key role in several other cross-government initiatives, such as co-chairing the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative. We are involved in a number of collaborative agreements and partnerships with other provincial jurisdictions, such as British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. We also worked with the federal government and other provincial jurisdictions on initiatives like the Pan-Canadian Online Learning portal, launched by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). In collaboration with CMEC, we led the development of a national student assessment program, and we represented provinces and territories in our work with the federal government to improve student financial assistance programs and to promote accessible and affordable post-secondary education.

As well, over 48,000 Albertans improved their basic literacy, English as a second language or employability skills through community-based programs funded by the department.

Our successes are a testament to the collaboration among government, industry, post-secondary institutions, schools, teachers, parents and students. Our new vision statement challenges the department and our partners to maintain high levels of innovation, creativity and collaboration. Working together, we will continue to achieve exceptional results and provide outstanding experiences for all Alberta learners.



Maria David-Evans
Deputy Minister
Alberta Learning

# Auditor General's Report

AUDITOR GENERAL *Alberta*

## Report of the Auditor General on the Results of Applying Specified Auditing Procedures to Performance Information

To the Members of the Legislative Assembly

In connection with the Ministry of Learning's performance information included in the *2003-2004 Annual Report of the Ministry of Learning* as presented on pages 18 to 38, and pages 203 to 214, I have:

**Core Measures**

1. Agreed information from an external organization to reports from the organization.

2. Agreed information from reports that originated from organizations included in the consolidated financial statements of the Ministry to source reports. In addition, I tested the procedures used to compile the underlying data into the source reports.

3. Checked that the presentation of results is consistent with the stated methodology.

4. Checked that the results presented are comparable to stated targets, and information presented in prior years.

5. Checked that the core performance measures, as well as targets, agree to and include results for all of the measures presented in Budget 2003.

**Supplemental Information**

6. Agreed the information to source reports. In addition, I checked that the supporting narrative is consistent with the information.

As a result of applying the above procedures, I found no exceptions. These procedures, however, do not constitute an audit and therefore I express no opinion on the performance information included in the *2003-2004 Annual Report of the Ministry of Learning*.

FCA
Auditor General

Edmonton, Alberta
September 21, 2004

# Ministry Performance
# Goal 1 – High Quality Learning Opportunities for All

**In support of this goal, in 2003/04:**

- The Ministry provided more than $3 billion in operating grants to school boards to continue to provide high quality programs for K-12 students. Included in this amount was $37 million recommended by Alberta's Commission on Learning.
- Operating grants of almost $1.2 billion were provided to post-secondary institutions. This funding went toward the provision of a diversity of high quality programs by Alberta's post-secondary institutions.
- In response to industry needs, the Ministry provided $20 million as part of Access funding to increase access to Apprenticeship and Industry Training programs.

✓ Met target

Results from base year for measures without targets or not meeting targets (taking the confidence interval into account):

= No change

↑ Improved Performance

↓ Performance decline

Goal 1 has four outcomes: the learning system meets the needs of all learners, society and the economy; all Albertans can participate in quality learning; the learning system is affordable; and financial need is not a barrier to learners participating in learning opportunities. There are six Ministry core measures to assess and report on these outcomes, five of which have targets. Targets were met on four of these measures, performance declined on one measure and remained unchanged on one. Rather than relating solely to funding for the 2003/04 fiscal year, achievement of results for the core measures reflects a cumulative amount of effort and funding over a number of years. Below are the performance highlights for 2003/04 for this goal.

## PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

**Satisfaction with Education or Training**

✓ **Basic Education** – A substantial majority of the public (71%) remains satisfied with the overall quality of basic education. The target was met.

**Apprenticeship and Industry Training** –

✓ **On-the-Job Training** – The percentage of recent Apprenticeship graduates satisfied with their on-the-job training increased to 93%. The target for the most recent year (2002/03) was met.

✓ **Technical Training** - The percentage of recent Apprenticeship graduates satisfied with their technical training increased to 95%. The target for 2002/03 was met.

✓ **Post-secondary Education** – A large majority (79%) of post-secondary graduates are satisfied with the overall quality of their education, meeting the target.

**Satisfaction with Access**

= **Access to Lifelong Learning** – A substantial majority of the public (72%) continues to be satisfied that adult learners have access to the education and training they want.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

↓ **Affordability of the Learning System** – While half the public (50%) agrees that the learning system is within the means of most Albertans, results have declined over time. Alberta Learning continues to increase assistance to post-secondary learners and to enhance awareness of planning for post-secondary studies, including the availability of financial assistance and the return on investment in education.

## Quality of Basic Education

**TARGET:**

- The target was met.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Over 70% of the public are satisfied with the overall quality of basic education.
- There has been a gradual increase over time in public satisfaction levels, with some variation from year to year.

**Percentages of the Public Satisfied with Overall Quality of Basic Education**

**Source:** Alberta Learning: Criterion Research Corp. – 2000, 2001; R.A. Malatest & Associates – 2002, 2003; Compustat Consultants Inc. – 2004.

**Note:**

- See Endnote A, pages 52-55, for information on surveys conducted for Alberta Learning.

## Quality of Apprenticeship Training

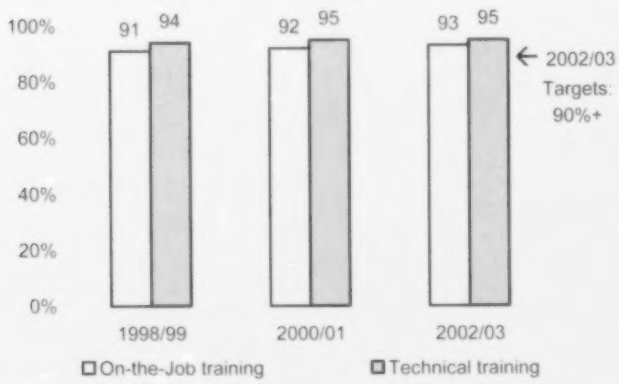
**TARGET:**

- No targets were set for 2003/04, as a biennial survey last conducted in 2002/03 is the data source for this measure. The targets for 2002/03 were met.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Very high percentages of recent apprenticeship graduates continue to be satisfied with the quality of their on-the-job and technical training.
- Results of the survey in 2002/03 indicated a gradual increase to 93% in satisfaction with on-the-job training, while satisfaction with technical training increased slightly to 95% in 2000/01 and remained at that level in 2002/03.

**Percentages of Recent Apprenticeship Graduates Satisfied with their On-the-Job Training and Technical Training**




**Source:** Alberta Learning: Nichols Applied Management – 1999 and 2003; R.A. Malatest & Associates – 2001.

**Notes:**

- Graduates of apprenticeship programs in 1997/98, 1999/2000 and 2001/02 (based on the August 1 – July 31 year) were surveyed six to 18 months after graduation.
- In 2000/01 and 2002/03 only graduates who took technical training as part of their apprenticeship program are included in the results for satisfaction with technical training. It was not possible to separate these respondents from the total in the 1998/99 survey. The number of respondents to the technical training question was 2,821 in 2002/03 and 2,567 in 2000/01 with a confidence interval of plus or minus 0.4% for both years, reflecting a finite population factor, which is more appropriate for the size of this population.
- See Endnote A, pages 52-55, for information on surveys conducted for Alberta Learning.

## GOAL 1 CORE MEASURES

### Quality of Post-secondary Education

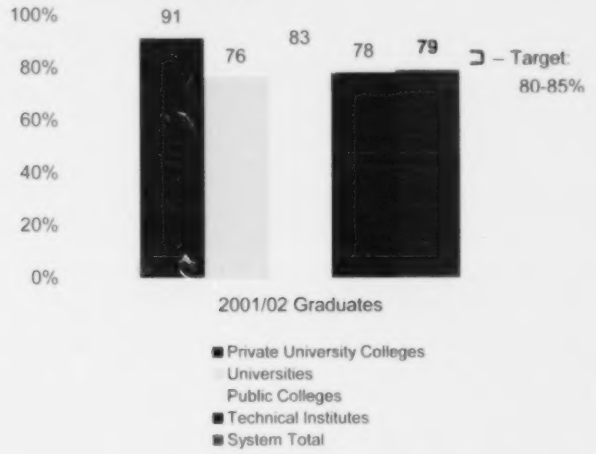
**TARGET:**

- The target was met, as the result is within 95% of the target.

**DISCUSSION:**

- A large majority of 2001/02 graduates (79%) surveyed in 2003/04 was satisfied with the overall quality of their post-secondary education.
- Results were strong in each sector as well, ranging from 76% for universities to 91% for private university colleges.
- Only 6% of respondents expressed some level of dissatisfaction with the overall quality of their education, and 15% expressed neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction.
- 2001/02 graduates of certificate, diploma and degree programs were surveyed two years after graduation as part of the new combined post-secondary graduate satisfaction and employment survey. Previous satisfaction surveys were exit surveys, conducted at the time of graduation, and also included adult learners completing preparatory and basic upgrading programs.
- The results of the 2003/04 survey are not comparable to the results of the previous surveys. For those results, see Alberta Learning's 2002/03 Annual Report.

**Percentages of Recent Post-secondary Graduates Satisfied with the Overall Quality of Their Education (new methodology)**




**Source:** Alberta Learning.

**Notes:**

- Graduating students in parchment programs (i.e., certificate, diploma and degree programs) are surveyed every other year.
- See Endnote A, pages 52-55, for other information on the surveys conducted for Alberta Learning.

## Access to Lifelong Learning

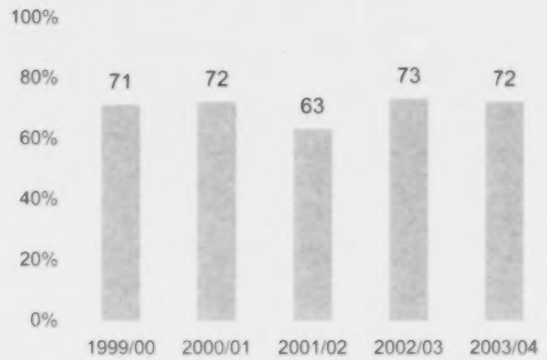
**TARGET:**

- No target was set for 2003/04 in the 2003-06 Business Plan, as there was only one year of results for the new question.

**DISCUSSION:**

- A substantial majority of the public is satisfied that most adults have access to the education or training they want.
- Satisfaction in 2003/04 is consistent with the longer term trend.
- Other information from the annual public surveys provides additional perspectives on Albertans' access to learning opportunities:
  - The proportion of adults reporting participation in education or training has been relatively stable in recent years at about 33%.
  - For those not taking education or training in 2003/04, the reasons cited most often were "lack of time" (by 20% of respondents) and "no need/not required by job" (by 18% of respondents). In recent years, these have ranked consistently as the top two reasons given, and together have accounted for about 40% of all responses each year (see table on next page).

**Public Satisfaction that Most Albertans have Access to Education and Training**




**Source:** Alberta Learning; Criterion Research Corp. – 2000, 2001; R.A. Malatest & Associates – 2002, 2003; Compustat Consultants Inc. – 2004.

**Notes:**

- This measure reports the weighted average result of questions asked of two components of the public: adult learners (those who reported taking education or training in the last 12 months) and adult Albertans who did not take education or training in the last 12 months.
- The wording of the question asked of adult learners was clarified in the 2002/03 survey. In previous years, adult learners were asked about their satisfaction that "**most adults** are able to access the education or training **they** want". Starting in 2002/03 they were asked about their satisfaction that "**you** are able to access the education or training **you** want".
- See Endnote A, pages 52-55, for information on surveys conducted for Alberta Learning.

## Affordability of the Learning System

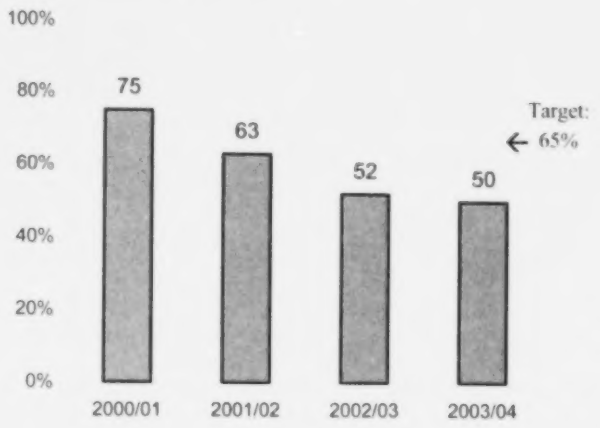
**TARGET:**

- The target for 2003/04 was not met.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Half of the public agrees that the learning system is within the means of most Albertans (about 43% disagree and 7% are uncertain). While agreement levels have declined since 2000/01, the result in 2003/04 is similar to the prior year.
- Notwithstanding these results, the actual participation of adults in education or training (including training at work) has been relatively stable in recent years (see the discussion on the previous page).
- Of adults who did not take education or training in the past 12 months (two-thirds of those surveyed), only 9% cited cost as the reason. "Costs too much" consistently ranks 4th to 6th in the list of primary reasons given. In recent years, between 7% and 11% of respondents provided cost as the primary reason for not participating in education or training.
- Government increased funding in 2003/04 to adult learners in the form of Heritage Scholarships, student loan relief, bursaries and other grants by $8.6 million (10.8%) over the prior year.

**Percentages of the Public who Agree that the Learning System is Within the Means of Most Albertans**




**Sources:** Alberta Learning: Criterion Research Corp. – 2001; R.A Malatest & Associates – 2002, 2003; Compustat Consultants Inc. – 2004.

**Notes:**

- In the survey, the learning system is defined in the introduction to a series of questions. The two questions preceding this one start: "Thinking about Alberta's learning system as a whole – that is, including elementary, junior and senior high schools, apprenticeship, and post-secondary institutions..." In the question for this measure, respondents are simply asked: "Again – thinking about the learning system as a whole – would you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree that Alberta's learning system is within the means of most Albertans?"
- The sample size for this question was 1,067 in 2000/01, with a confidence interval of plus or minus 3% .
- See Endnote A, pages 52-55, for other information on surveys conducted for Alberta Learning.

**Primary reasons for not taking education or training (percentages of respondents, and rank among all reasons)**

| | 1999/00 | 2000/01 | 2001/02 | 2002/03 | 2003/04 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lack of time | 27% (1) | 29% (1) | 18% (2) | 18% (2) | 20% (1) |
| Not necessary | 26% (2) | 25% (2) | 25% (1) | 25% (1) | 18% (2) |
| Age/retired | 9% (3) | 10% (3) | 9% (5) | 16% (4) | 9% (5) |
| Not interested | 8% (4) | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Family obligations | 8% (5) | 7% (5) | 12% (3) | -- | -- |
| Costs too much | 7% (6) | 8% (4) | 11%(4) | 8% (5) | 9% (4) |
| Working/Self employed | -- | -- | -- | 18% (3) | 14% (3) |

**Sources:** Alberta Learning: Criterion Research Corp. – 2000, 2001; R.A. Malatest & Associates – 2002, 2003; Compustat Consultants Inc. – 2004.

# Goal 2 – Excellence in Learner Outcomes

**In support of this goal in 2003/04:**

- The Ministry provided a total of $132 million through the Access Fund to post-secondary institutions to increase post-secondary enrolment in high-demand programs.
- The Ministry supported community-based programs with $19.7 million to provide post-secondary and continuing education courses for adults, including adult literacy, adult English as a Second Language, business, academic upgrading and university transfer.
- To give Alberta's children the best start possible, government allocated $187 million to public and private early childhood services programs.
- Approximately $5.5 million was provided to school jurisdictions for the First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FMNI) education program.
- The Ministry provided approximately $20 million to school boards for English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.
- Funding for services for students with severe special needs in Grades 1-12 was $181 million.
- To enable school jurisdictions to purchase additional learning resources, the Ministry allocated $20 million in one-time resource grants.
- Funding of $10 million was provided to post-secondary institutions through the Performance Envelope to recognize achievement of results.
- The Ministry provided over $57 million in scholarships and bursaries to Alberta's post-secondary students, including apprentices, for their achievements.

✓ Met target

Results from base year for measures without targets or not meeting targets (taking the confidence interval into account):

= No change

↑ Improved performance

↓ Performance decline

Goal 2 has five outcomes: learners demonstrate high standards; learners complete programs; learners are well prepared for lifelong learning; learners are well prepared for employment; and learners are well prepared for citizenship. There are ten Ministry core measures for the goal of Excellence in Learner Outcomes, six of which have targets. Rather than relating solely to funding for the 2003/04 fiscal year, achievement of results for the core measures reflects a cumulative amount of effort and funding over a number of years. Following are the 2003/04 performance highlights for this goal.

## PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

### Student Achievement

**Grade 3, 6, 9 Achievement Tests**

✓ At the standard of excellence, the targets for overall results on provincial achievement tests were met both for all students and those writing.

↑ From 1999/2000 to 2002/03, overall results improved for students who wrote achievement tests at the acceptable and excellence levels and for all students at the standard of excellence (2003/04 overall results are not comparable to prior years).

↑ **Grade 12 Diploma Examinations** – Students achieved provincial expectations on a larger portion of diploma examinations in 2002/03 and 2003/04 than in earlier years.

**Educational Attainment**

✓ **High School Completion in the Basic Learning System** – The high school completion rate within five years of entering Grade 10 rose to 75%. The target was met.

✓ **Apprenticeship Completion** – The apprenticeship completion rate has increased slightly over time, meeting the target.

✓ **High School Completion of Albertans 25-34** – The high school completion rate of Albertans aged 25-34 remained high at 89%. The target was met.

✓ **Post-secondary Completion of Albertans 25-34** – The percentage of Alberta's 25-34 year olds who complete post-secondary programs has increased over time, meeting the target.

**Readiness to Learn**

↑ **Early Childhood Services** – The percentage of students who participated in Early Childhood Services programs prior to Grade 1 has increased slightly over time to 96%.

**Preparation for Lifelong Learning**

✓ **Preparation for Lifelong learning** – Public agreement that adult learners are well-prepared for lifelong learning has increased slightly to 77%. The target was met.

**Preparation for Employment**

↑ **Employment Rate of High School Graduates** – The employment rate of high school graduates aged 25-34 has increased to 84%.

= **Employment Rate of Certificate/Diploma Graduates** – The employment rate of adult Albertans aged 25-34 who have completed a post-secondary certificate/diploma has remained high at 86%.

= **Employment Rate of Degree Graduates** – The employment rate of adult Albertans aged 25-34 with a university degree has remained high at 88%.

**Preparation for Citizenship**

✓ **High School Student Preparation for Citizenship** – Public satisfaction that high school students are well prepared for citizenship (61%) has increased, meeting the target.

✓ **Adult Learners Preparation for Citizenship** – Public satisfaction that adult learners are well-prepared for citizenship has increased over time to 66%. The target was met.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

↓ **Provincial Achievement Tests** – Overall results for all students at the acceptable level declined from 1999/2000 to 2002/03. Alberta Learning has restructured funding to school jurisdictions to provide more flexibility for addressing student needs, and has increased targeted funding to reduce class sizes and to enhance learning for students who need specific programs, such as early literacy. These funding changes may improve overall student results in future years.

↓ **Post-secondary Completion** - The completion rate of students in Alberta public post-secondary institutions in 2002/03 was 61% for university students and 59% for college and technical institute students. The Performance Envelope has been revised to include institutional post-secondary completion rates. This is an incentive to post-secondary institutions to increase their completion rates, which may improve provincial results in future years.

## Achievement Test Results Overall

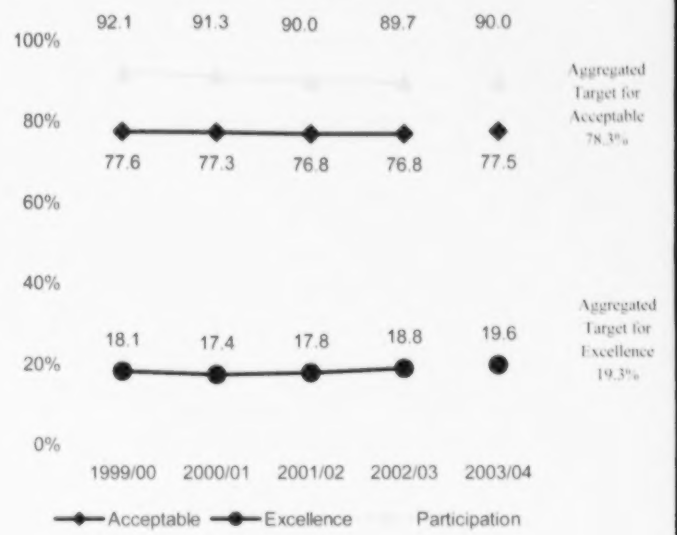
**TARGETS:**

- The aggregated targets for overall results on provincial achievement tests in grades 3, 6 and 9 at the standard of excellence were met.
- The aggregated targets at the acceptable standard were not met.

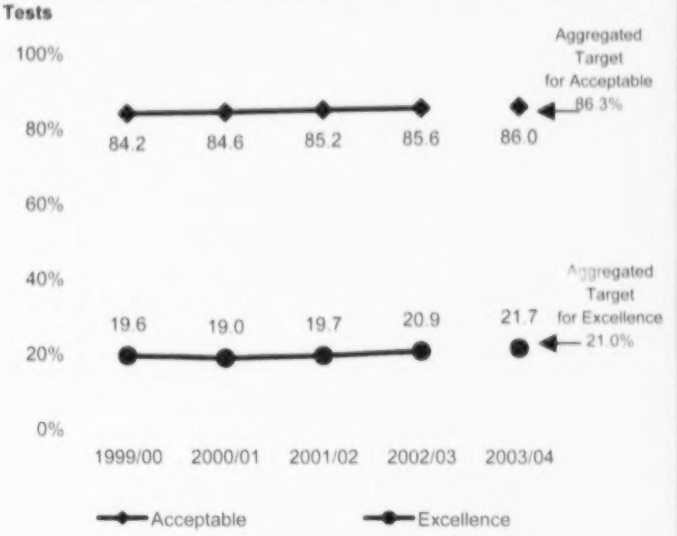
**DISCUSSION:**

- Science 9 test results and participation rates are not included in the aggregated results for 2003/04 since there was no target for that test. Targets were not set because the 2003/04 school year was the first year of full implementation of the new Science 9 Program of Studies.
- As Science 9 is not included in the 2003/04 information reported on the graphs, the 2003/04 results and participation rate are not directly comparable to prior years' results.
- Results in the earlier years improved over time for writers at both the acceptable and excellence levels, as well as for all students at the excellence level.
- In the 2003/04 school year, 90% of students participated in achievement tests (top graph).

**Combined Results (All Grades and Subjects) – Participation Rates and Percentages of Students Who Demonstrated Standards on Provincial Achievement Tests (total enrolment in grade)**




**Combined Results (All Grades and Subjects) – Percentages of Students Who Wrote and Met Standards on Provincial Achievement Tests**




**Source:** Alberta Learning

**Notes:**

- The percentages of students achieving the acceptable standard include the students achieving the standard of excellence.
- Aggregated targets are the averages of the targets for each subject and grade for the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence for both methods of calculating results.
- The 2003/04 aggregated data does not include Science 9 test results and participation rates, since no target was set for that test. No comparison should be made to previous years' data, which includes Science 9.
- See Endnote C, Provincial Achievement Tests, page 58.

## Achievement Test Results for All Students in Grade

**TARGETS:**

- Results for all students in grade met or exceeded targets for the standard of excellence in five of nine tests.
- Results for all students in grade met or exceeded targets for the acceptable standard in one test – Grade 6 Social Studies.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Student performance at the acceptable level improved in only one of nine tests since 1999/2000. However, the 1999/2000 results for Language Arts 3, 6 and 9 were an anomaly because the change of prompts for the written-response component may have reduced the question difficulty, particularly for average/low achievers.
- Student performance at the acceptable level improved in four of nine tests, while declining in five tests since 2002/03.
- Student performance at the standard of excellence improved since 1999/2000 in five of nine tests, and declined on four.
- Since last year, student performance at the excellence level improved in four of nine tests and declined on five.
- The percentages of students who achieve the acceptable standard in the Grade 9 Language Arts and Mathematics tests are reported annually by the provincial government as indicators of literacy and numeracy, as adult literacy surveys are not conducted regularly. Students who achieve the acceptable standard in language arts and mathematics have developed the foundation skills needed to become literate and numerate adults.

Note: Science 9 results are excluded from the discussion above as the results in 2003/04 are based on a new curriculum and are not comparable to prior years' results.

**Percentages of Students in Grades 3, 6 and 9 Demonstrating the Standards on Provincial Achievement Tests**

| Subject | 1999/ 2000 | 2000/ 2001 | 2001/ 2002 | 2002/ 2003 | 2003/ 2004 | Targets 2003/ 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade 3** | | | | | | |
| Language Arts | | | | | | |
| excellence | 17.9 | 16.1 | 14.9 | 15.7 | 15.1 | 17% |
| acceptable | 84.3 | 82.8 | 81.2 | 82.4 | 81.7 | 83% |
| Mathematics | | | | | | |
| excellence | 25.7 | 23.8 | 26.7 | 29.8 | 27.4 | 27% |
| acceptable | 82.1 | 81.8 | 81.2 | 82.3 | 81.8 | 82% |
| **Grade 6** | | | | | | |
| Language Arts | | | | | | |
| excellence | 19.4 | 14.9 | 15.1 | 17.3 | 15.5 | 16% |
| acceptable | 80.3 | 78.7 | 80.8 | 81.2 | 79.1 | 81% |
| Mathematics | | | | | | |
| excellence | 16.5 | 17.9 | 18.1 | 17.7 | 21.2 | 19% |
| acceptable | 78.9 | 79.3 | 78.3 | 78.3 | 78.5 | 79% |
| Science | | | | | | |
| excellence | 24.7 | 25.3 | 22.6 | 24.1 | 26.2 | 25% |
| acceptable | 79.0 | 82.0 | 79.5 | 80.0 | 80.6 | 81% |
| Social Studies | | | | | | |
| excellence | 19.9 | 18.7 | 19.4 | 20.3 | 19.7 | 20% |
| acceptable | 78.7 | 78.6 | 78.3 | 79.0 | 78.6 | 78% |
| **Grade 9** | | | | | | |
| Language Arts | | | | | | |
| excellence | 13.6 | 13.1 | 14.6 | 13.5 | 12.4 | 15% |
| acceptable | 80.1 | 78.8 | 78.5 | 78.0 | 77.6 | 80% |
| Mathematics | | | | | | |
| excellence | 14.4 | 16.3 | 16.7 | 17.6 | 18.9 | 17% |
| acceptable | 66.9 | 66.5 | 64.5 | 63.5 | 66.1 | 67% |
| Science | | | | | | |
| excellence | 12.6 | 11.9 | 11.4 | 13.0 | 12.1 | -- |
| acceptable | 72.0 | 71.7 | 71.6 | 71.1 | 66.6 | -- |
| Social Studies | | | | | | |
| excellence | 16.2 | 16.0 | 18.0 | 18.7 | 20.0 | 18% |
| acceptable | 73.4 | 72.8 | 73.8 | 72.6 | 73.1 | 74% |

**Source:** Alberta Learning.

**Notes:**

- The percentages achieving the acceptable standard include the percentages achieving the standard of excellence.
- The 2002/03 Science 9 test results do not include one third of Grade 9 students who wrote Science 9 Form B, based on the learning outcomes of the new Program of Studies. 2003/04 results in Science 9 are not comparable to prior years' results.
- In 2003/04, the new Science test was fully implemented and no target was set.
- See Endnote C, Provincial Achievement Tests, page 58.

**Participation Rates for Provincial Achievement Tests (Supplemental Information)**

| Subject | 1999/ 2000 | 2000/ 2001 | 2001/ 2002 | 2002/ 2003 | 2003/ 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade 3** | | | | | |
| Language Arts | 93.0 | 92.6 | 90.6 | 91.5 | 90.6 |
| Mathematics | 93.4 | 93.4 | 91.6 | 92.1 | 91.7 |
| **Grade 6** | | | | | |
| Language Arts | 93.0 | 92.1 | 91.2 | 91.0 | 90.9 |
| Mathematics | 93.7 | 92.9 | 91.8 | 91.4 | 91.1 |
| Science | 93.1 | 93.1 | 91.6 | 91.0 | 91.2 |
| Social Studies | 93.6 | 92.8 | 91.2 | 91.4 | 91.0 |
| **Grade 9** | | | | | |
| Language Arts | 89.6 | 88.3 | 87.5 | 87.4 | 87.3 |
| Mathematics | 89.9 | 88.4 | 87.5 | 87.4 | 87.7 |
| Science | 90.7 | 89.7 | 88.7 | 85.9 | 88.6 |
| Social Studies | 90.7 | 89.3 | 88.7 | 87.7 | 88.6 |

**Source:** Alberta Learning.

**Note:**

- See Endnote C, Provincial Achievement Tests, page 58.

## Achievement Test Results for Test Writers

**TARGETS:**

- Results for students who wrote provincial achievement tests met or exceeded the targets for the acceptable standard in five of nine tests.
- The same is also true for results meeting or exceeding the targets for the standard of excellence.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Student performance at the acceptable standard has improved in seven of nine tests since 1999/2000, and improved in four tests since last year.
- Student performance at the standard of excellence improved in six of nine tests since 1999/2000, and improved in four tests since last year.
- There were noticeable improvements in student performance on Mathematics 6 and 9 and Science 6 tests in the 2003/04 school year at both the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence over time and since last year.

Note: Science 9 results are excluded from the discussion above as the results in 2003/04 are based on a new curriculum and are not comparable to prior years' results.

**Percentages of Students in Grades 3, 6 and 9 Who Wrote and Achieved the Standards on Provincial Achievement Tests**

| Subject | 1999/ 2000 | 2000/ 2001 | 2001/ 2002 | 2002/ 2003 | 2003/ 2004 | Targets 2003/ 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade 3** | | | | | | |
| Language Arts | | | | | | |
| excellence | 19.3 | 17.4 | 16.4 | 17.2 | 16.7 | 18% |
| acceptable | 90.7 | 89.4 | 89.6 | 90.1 | 90.2 | 91% |
| Mathematics | | | | | | |
| excellence | 27.5 | 25.4 | 29.2 | 32.4 | 29.9 | 30% |
| acceptable | 87.9 | 87.6 | 88.7 | 89.3 | 89.2 | 89% |
| **Grade 6** | | | | | | |
| Language Arts | | | | | | |
| excellence | 20.9 | 16.2 | 16.5 | 19.0 | 17.0 | 17% |
| acceptable | 86.3 | 85.4 | 88.6 | 89.2 | 87.0 | 88% |
| Mathematics | | | | | | |
| excellence | 17.6 | 19.3 | 19.7 | 19.3 | 23.3 | 20% |
| acceptable | 84.2 | 85.4 | 85.2 | 85.6 | 86.2 | 86% |
| Science | | | | | | |
| excellence | 26.5 | 27.2 | 24.6 | 26.5 | 28.8 | 26% |
| acceptable | 84.9 | 88.0 | 86.7 | 87.9 | 88.3 | 88% |
| Social Studies | | | | | | |
| excellence | 21.2 | 20.2 | 21.3 | 22.3 | 21.7 | 22% |
| acceptable | 84.1 | 84.7 | 85.9 | 86.4 | 86.4 | 86% |
| **Grade 9** | | | | | | |
| Language Arts | | | | | | |
| excellence | 15.1 | 14.9 | 16.7 | 15.4 | 14.2 | 17% |
| acceptable | 89.5 | 89.2 | 89.8 | 89.2 | 88.9 | 91% |
| Mathematics | | | | | | |
| excellence | 16.1 | 18.4 | 19.1 | 20.1 | 21.5 | 19% |
| acceptable | 74.4 | 75.2 | 73.7 | 72.6 | 75.4 | 75% |
| Science | | | | | | |
| excellence | 13.9 | 13.3 | 12.8 | 15.1 | 13.6 | -- |
| acceptable | 79.4 | 79.9 | 80.7 | 82.8 | 75.2 | -- |
| Social Studies | | | | | | |
| excellence | 17.8 | 17.9 | 20.3 | 21.3 | 22.6 | 20% |
| acceptable | 80.9 | 81.5 | 83.2 | 82.8 | 82.6 | 83% |

**Source:** Alberta Learning.

**Notes:**

- The percentages achieving the acceptable standard include the percentages achieving the standard of excellence.
- The 2002/03 Science 9 test results do not include one third of Grade 9 students who wrote Science 9 Form B, which reflects the learning outcomes from the new Program of Studies.
- In 2003/04, the new Science 9 program was fully implemented and no target was set. Science 9 results in 2003/04 are not comparable to prior years.
- See Endnote C, Provincial Achievement Tests, page 58.

## Diploma Examination Results

**TARGET:**

- No targets were set for 2003/04, but will be in future years, since a method for equating diploma examinations is being phased in, to enable direct comparison of results over time.

**DISCUSSION:**

- In the 2002/03 and 2003/04 school years, provincial expectations were achieved for a larger portion of diploma examinations at the excellence and acceptable levels, compared to earlier years.
- In 2003/04, students met or exceeded provincial expectations at the excellence level in nine exams and also met or exceeded expectations at the acceptable level in seven exams.
- Test equating was implemented in 2003/04 for Social Studies 30 and 33. This initiative will enable direct comparison of the 2003/04 results to any subsequent year's results for these courses.

## Participation in Diploma Exam Courses (Supplemental Information)

- Completing an English and a Social Studies diploma examination course is required for high school graduation.
- The percentages of students in their third year of high school who completed a Social Studies diploma course has increased each year since 2000/01, and reached 87% in 2003/04.
- 81% of students completed one of the new English diploma courses in 2003/04. An additional 5% of students completed one of the courses (English 30 and 33) that are being phased out, for a total of 86%.
- The participation rates for Science 30 and Social Studies 33 increased since last year, while the participation rates for all other diploma courses remained the same.

**Percentages of Students Writing Diploma Examinations who Achieved Standards**

| Course | Standard | 1999/ 2000 | 2000/ 2001 | 2001/ 2002 | 2002/ 2003 | 2003/ 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English 30 - 1 | excellence | -- | -- | -- | -- | 19 |
| | acceptable | -- | -- | -- | -- | 92 |
| English 30 - 2 | excellence | -- | -- | -- | -- | 7 |
| | acceptable | -- | -- | -- | -- | 85 |
| French Language Arts 30 | excellence | -- | -- | -- | 15 | 17 |
| | acceptable | -- | -- | -- | 95 | 95 |
| Social Studies 30 | excellence | 16 | 19 | 21 | 22 | 24 |
| | acceptable | 84 | 85 | 86 | 87 | 86 |
| Social Studies 33 | excellence | 13 | 13 | 12 | 13 | 15 |
| | acceptable | 81 | 81 | 81 | 82 | 83 |
| Pure Mathematics 30 | excellence | -- | 20 | 28 | 27 | 32 |
| | acceptable | -- | 77 | 82 | 85 | 84 |
| Applied Mathematics 30 | excellence | -- | -- | -- | 14 | 14 |
| | acceptable | -- | -- | -- | 85 | 86 |
| Biology 30 | excellence | 23 | 27 | 26 | 22 | 27 |
| | acceptable | 81 | 81 | 84 | 81 | 82 |
| Chemistry 30 | excellence | 24 | 22 | 24 | 25 | 28 |
| | acceptable | 84 | 79 | 82 | 85 | 86 |
| Physics 30 | excellence | 28 | 24 | 33 | 25 | 30 |
| | acceptable | 83 | 79 | 84 | 82 | 87 |
| Science 30 | excellence | 11 | 14 | 12 | 20 | 17 |
| | acceptable | 78 | 83 | 82 | 88 | 84 |

**Source:** Alberta Learning.

**Notes:**

- 85% of students are expected to achieve the acceptable standard and 15% are expected to achieve the standard of excellence. These provincial expectations are reference points used in the basic learning system to interpret results, not targets in the 2003-06 business plan.
- The percentages of students achieving the acceptable standard include the percentages of students achieving the standard of excellence.
- 2003/04 is the first year of full implementation of English 30-1 and 30-2, which reflect the new Program of Studies. English 30 and 33, based on the old program, are being phased out.
- Starting in 2002/03 for the Social Studies exams and in 2003/04 for all math/science exams, the written and multiple choice portions are administered in separate settings.

**Percentages of Students Completing Diploma Examination Courses in Their Third Year of High School (participation)**

| Subject | 1999/ 2000 | 2000/ 2001 | 2001/ 2002 | 2002/ 2003 | 2003/ 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English 30 - 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 56 |
| English 30 - 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 25 |
| French Language Arts 30 | -- | -- | -- | 3 | 3 |
| Social Studies 30 | 49 | 49 | 51 | 53 | 53 |
| Social Studies 33 | 35 | 34 | 33 | 33 | 34 |
| Pure Math 30 | -- | 33 | 42 | 44 | 44 |
| Applied Math 30 | -- | -- | -- | 22 | 22 |
| Biology 30 | 38 | 39 | 41 | 43 | 43 |
| Chemistry 30 | 36 | 35 | 36 | 38 | 38 |
| Physics 30 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 24 |
| Science 30 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 |

**Source:** Alberta Learning.

**Notes:**

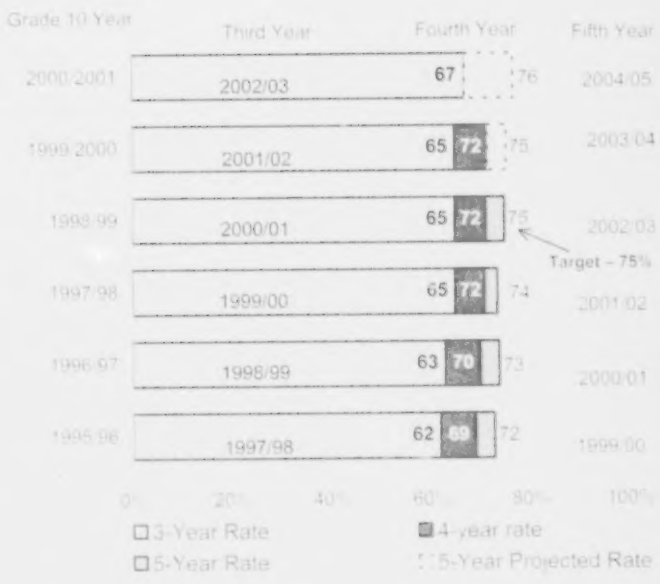
- Students can choose among courses to complete high school and meet post-secondary entry requirements; only part of the Grade 12 class writes each diploma exam.
- See Endnote C, Diploma Examinations, pages 58-59.

## High School Completion

- The target was met.

- The high school completion rate within five years of entering Grade 10 (the core measure) has increased 1% each year since 1999/2000, reaching 75% in the 2002/03 school year (the most recent year completion rates are available).
- The four-year high school completion rate, calculated for the first time, increased from 69% in 1998/99 to 72% in 2000/01. It has remained stable at 72% in subsequent years.
- After remaining steady for three years at 65%, the three-year high school completion rate rose to 67% in the 2002/03 school year.
- These increases reflect increased attention to high school completion in recent years and the recognition that high school completion is needed for success.
- Of the students included in the five-year rate, most (over 85%) complete in three years. This makes the three-year rate a reliable predictor of the five-year rate in future years. Projections indicate the five-year rate will continue to increase at a modest pace.
- Substantial portions of students who do not complete high school in the basic learning system attain high school completion status as adults (see Educational Attainment measure, page 25).

**High School Completion Rates**




**Source:** Alberta Learning

**Notes:**

- Projections may not appear likely to be attained. Given the three-year graduation rate is also a projection of Grade 10 students' completion rates in future years. The projection for 2004/05 also considers the projected 9% decline in the 2001/02 Grade 10 cohort.
- Included in the completion rate are students who graduate with an alternative diploma or certificate.
- See Endnote 5, "High School Completion Rate," page 59.

## High School Completion

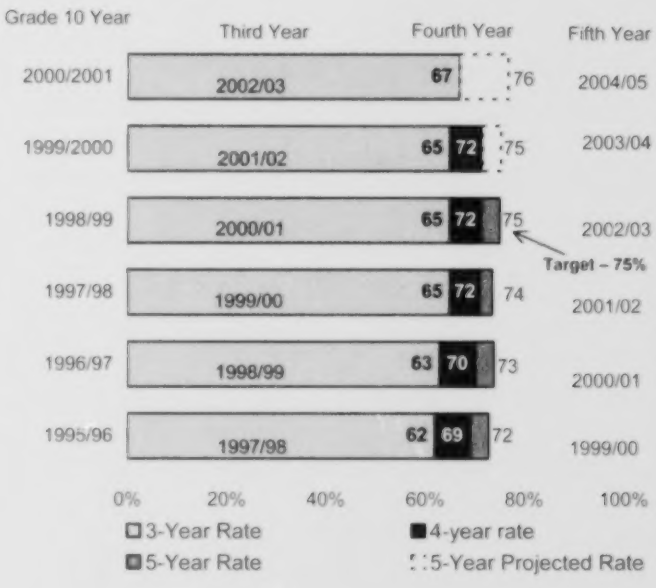
**TARGET:**

- The target was met.

**DISCUSSION:**

- The high school completion rate within five years of entering Grade 10 (the core measure) has increased 1% each year since 1999/2000, reaching 75% in the 2002/03 school year (the most recent year completion rates are available).
- The four-year high school completion rate, calculated for the first time, increased from 69% in 1998/99 to 72% in 2000/01. It has remained stable at 72% in subsequent years.
- After remaining steady for three years at 65%, the three-year high school completion rate rose to 67% in the 2002/03 school year.
- These increases reflect increased attention to high school completion in recent years and the recognition that high school completion is needed for success.
- Of the students included in the five-year rate, most (over 85%) complete in three years. This makes the three-year rate a reliable predictor of the five-year rate in future years. Projections indicate the five-year rate will continue to increase at a modest pace.
- Substantial portions of students who do not complete high school in the basic learning system attain high school completion status as adults (see Educational Attainment measure, page 25).

**High School Completion Rates**




**Source:** Alberta Learning.

**Notes:**

- Projections indicate results likely to be achieved given the three-year completion rates for these groups of Grade 10 students and completion rates in prior years. The projection for 2004/05 also considers the projected 5-year rate for 2003/04.
- Included in the calculation of high school completion rates is an estimated attrition adjustment.
- See Endnote C, High School Completion Rate, page 59.

## Apprenticeship Completion

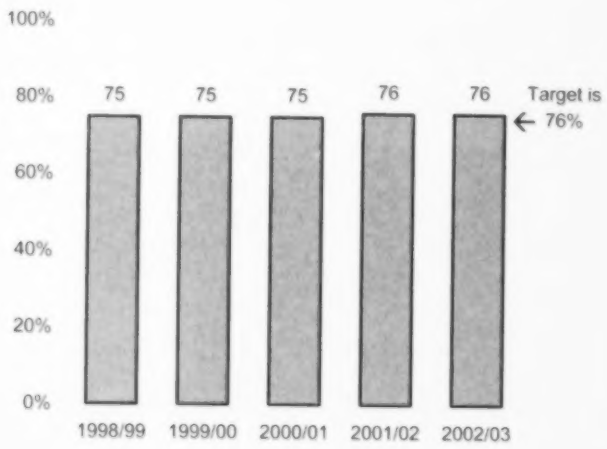
**TARGET:**

- The target was met.

**DISCUSSION:**

- In 2002/03, a substantial majority of apprentices (76%) received their journeyman certificates for completion of an apprenticeship program within two years of the length of their program.
- Completion rates rose slightly in 2001/02 following several years of stable rates. In 2002/03, 76% of apprentices who completed their first period requirements in a trade went on to complete their programs.
- Apprentices were tracked for two years past the normal program length to determine the completion rate.
- Improving economic conditions in Alberta in the mid-1990s and healthy economic conditions since 2000 may have facilitated completions as apprentices had opportunity to complete on-the-job and technical training.

**Apprenticeship Completion Rate**




**Source:** Alberta Learning.

**Notes:**

- Includes apprentices who have completed all the requirements of their first period of apprenticeship training. Excludes programs of less than two years in length.
- Based on July 1 to June 30 for all years of data provided.
- See Endnote C, Apprenticeship Completion Rate, page 60.
- See Endnote B, pages 56-57, for information on assessment of results over time.

## Post-secondary Completion

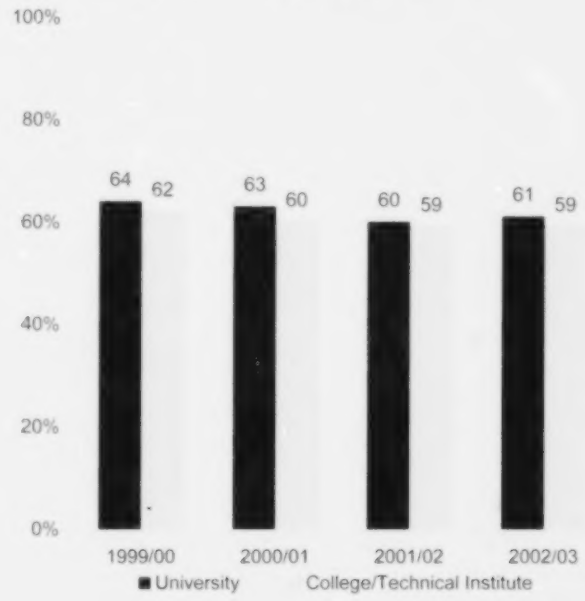
**TARGET:**

- No target has been set for this interim measure.

**DISCUSSION:**

- The post-secondary completion rate aggregates the institutional completion rates for universities and for colleges and technical institutes. To determine completion, post-secondary students were tracked for three years beyond the length of the program at the institution where they began as first-year students.
- The completion rates for both sectors have declined since 1999/2000 and have been fairly stable in 2001/02 and 2002/03. These results may reflect Alberta's improved economic conditions through the mid-1990s as students may have transferred to another institution to gain marketable skills more quickly or may have entered the labour force before completing their credential.
- Data for prior years have been restated due to the availability of more complete data files in 2003/04 for prior years.
- With this interim methodology, system-wide completion rates may not be adequately represented because information is not available to account for the completion of students who start at one post-secondary institution then complete at another one.
- Alberta Learning is currently implementing the Alberta Student Number (ASN) for all post-secondary students. This will allow for a more accurate calculation of completion rates in the post-secondary system, including the tracking of transfer students.

**Interim Post-secondary Completion Rate**




**Source:** Alberta Learning

**Notes:**

- Alberta College of Art & Design's programs are included in the University Sector as these programs are four-year undergraduate degree programs.
- The university sector completion rate is based on undergraduate programs tracked for seven years; therefore, the 1999/2000 rate for universities is based on the 1993/94 entry cohort, the 2000/01 rate is based on the 1994/95 entry cohort, the 2001/02 rate is based on the 1995/96 entry cohort and the 2002/03 rate is based on the 1996/97 entry cohort.
- The completion rates for the college and technical institute sectors is based on tracking first-time students for the program length plus three years, i. e., tracking for four years for a certificate program and five years for a diploma program.
- University completion rates were restated for 1999/2000 and 2001/02, and college/technical institute rates were restated for 2001/02, as the data files were more complete in 2003/04 for prior years.
- See Endnote C, Interim Post-secondary Completion Rate, pages 60-61.

## Educational Attainment

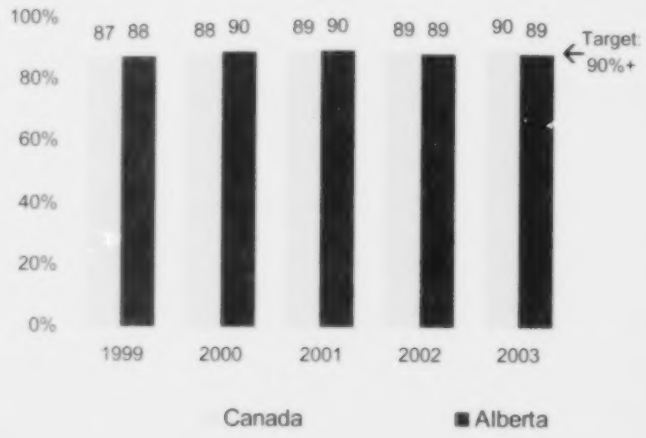
**TARGET**

- The targets for high school completion and for post-secondary completion were met, as the results are within 5% of the respective targets.

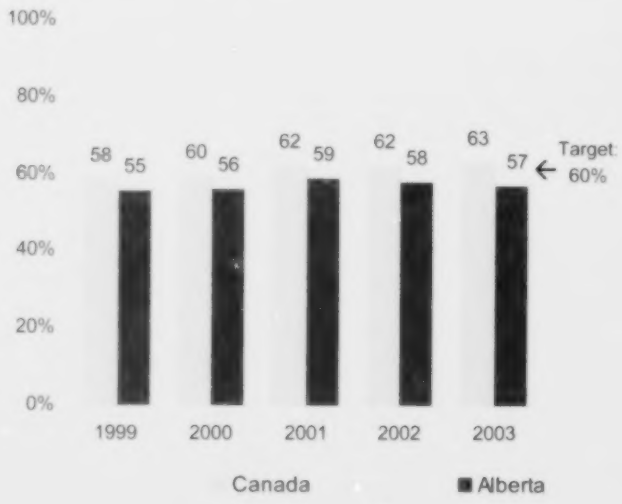
**DISCUSSION**

- The percentage of Albertans aged 25-34 with at least high school completion remains stable on a year-to-year basis.
- Alberta's results for high school completion remain high and are similar to the national average.
- The post-secondary completion rate of Albertans aged 25-34 has increased slightly since 1999, and remains below the Canadian average.
- Alberta's 25-34 year olds continue to have the highest employment rate in Canada, suggesting ample employment opportunities for young adults. This may affect post-secondary completion rates as individuals take advantage of Alberta's employment opportunities.

**Percentages of Albertans aged 25-34 who Completed High School**




**Percentages of Albertans aged 25-34 who Completed Post-Secondary Programs**




**Source:** Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey, Special tabulation for Alberta Learning.

**Notes:**

- Since respondents were asked about their highest level of education, those who indicated they have participated in or completed post-secondary studies are considered to have completed high school.
- See Endnote B, pages 207-208 on the use of confidence intervals for survey measures to interpret results and on assessment of results over time.
- See Endnote C, Educational Attainment, page 61.

## Preparation of Children for School

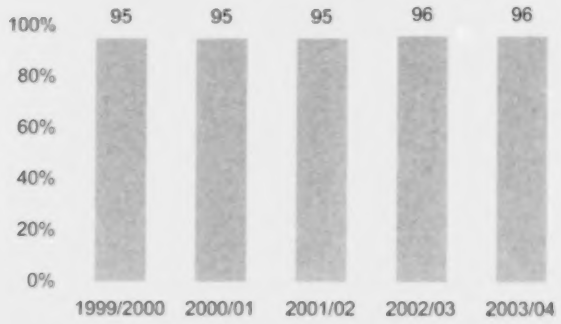
**TARGET:**

- No target was set for this proxy measure of readiness to learn.

**DISCUSSION:**

- The percentage of students who participated in Early Childhood Services (ECS) programs before entering Grade 1 was very high at 96% in 2003/04, and has increased slightly over time.
- Most parents choose to enroll their children in ECS programs even though ECS attendance is not mandatory.
- ECS programming is designed to prepare children for entry into Grade 1 and to provide a foundation for success in school.

**Percentages of Grade 1 Students who Attended Early Childhood Services Programs**




**Source:** Alberta Learning.

**Notes:**

- Includes children enrolled in Early Childhood Services or upgraded programs prior to Grade 1.
- See Endnote C, Participation in Early Childhood Services Programs, page 61.
- See Endnote B, pages 56-57, for information on assessment of results over time.

## Preparation for Lifelong Learning

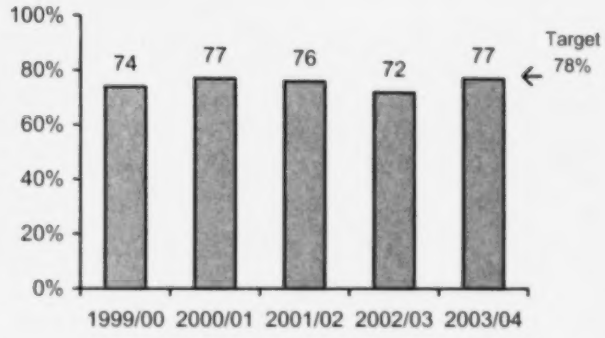
**TARGET:**

- The target was met, as the result was within 5% of the target.

**DISCUSSION:**

- More than three-quarters (77%) of the public is satisfied that adult learners are prepared for lifelong learning.
- The satisfaction level in 2003/04 has increased slightly since 1999/2000.
- This satisfaction measure was replaced in Alberta Learning's 2004-07 Business Plan with a high school to post-secondary transition rate.
- The transition rate measure has been developed and is calculated by tracking Grade 10 students for four and six years. Four-year and six-year transition rates are presented to introduce this new measure.
- The percentage of students entering post-secondary programs within four years of starting Grade 10 increased slightly from 31% in 1998/99 to 32% in 1999/2000 and has remained steady at that level in subsequent years. The percentage of students entering post-secondary within six years of starting Grade 10 also increased in 2001/02 and continued at 51% in 2002/03.

**Public Satisfaction that Adult Learners are Well Prepared for Lifelong Learning**

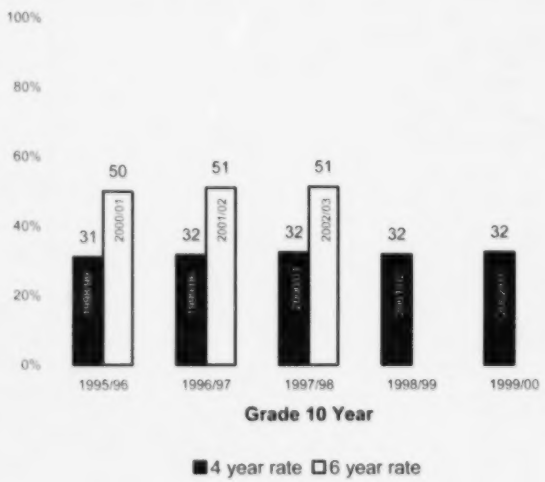



**Sources**: Alberta Learning: Criterion Research Corp. – 2000, 2001, R.A. Malatest & Associates – 2002, 2003; Compustat Consultants Inc. – 2004.

**Notes:**

- The question for this measure was modified slightly in 2002/03 to include a definition of lifelong learning. In prior years, respondents were asked about their satisfaction that "adults taking education or training are being taught an appropriate combination of skills to prepare them for lifelong learning." In 2002/03, "lifelong learning" was replaced with "learning throughout their lifetime."
- See Endnote A, pages 52-55, for information on surveys conducted for Alberta Learning.
- See Endnote B, pages 56-57, for information on assessment of results over time.

**High School to Post-secondary Transition Rate (new core measure starting 2004/05)**




**Source:** Alberta Learning

Notes:

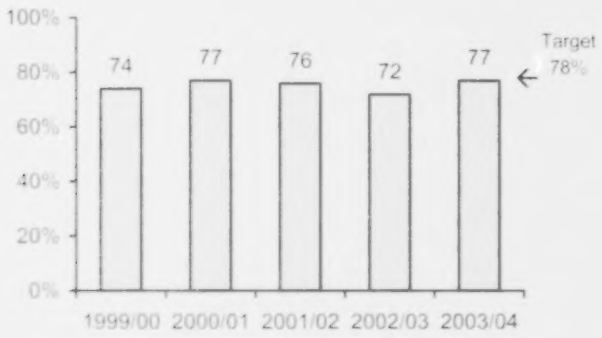
- Students are considered to be attending post-secondary if they are enrolled in a public or private post-secondary institution in Alberta or registered in an apprenticeship program in Alberta. Adjustments for attrition and attending post-secondary out of province based on estimates are applied in calculating the transition rates.
- The transition year is noted in the columns in the graph.
- See Endnote C, High School to Post-secondary Transition Rate, pages 61-62.

## Preparation for Lifelong Learning

- The target was met, as the result was within 5% of the target.

- More than three-quarters (77%) of the public is satisfied that adult learners are prepared for lifelong learning.
- The satisfaction level in 2003-04 has increased slightly since 1999-2000.
- This satisfaction measure was replaced in Alberta Learning's 2004-07 Business Plan with a high school to post-secondary transition rate.
- The transition rate measure has been developed and is calculated by tracking Grade 10 students for four and six years. Four-year and six-year transition rates are presented to introduce this new measure.
- The percentage of students entering post-secondary programs within four years of starting Grade 10 increased slightly from 31% in 1998-99 to 32% in 1999-2000 and has remained steady at that level in subsequent years. The percentage of students entering post-secondary within six years of starting Grade 10 also increased in 2001-02 and continued at 51% in 2002-03.

**Public Satisfaction that Adult Learners are Well Prepared for Lifelong Learning**

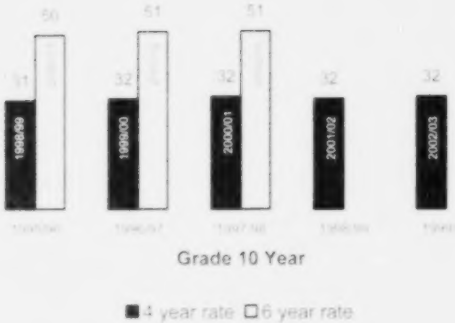



**Sources:** Alberta Learning, Criterion Research Corp., 2000, 2001; R.A. Malatest & Associates, 2002, 2003; Compusta Consultants Inc., 2004

**Notes:**

- The question for this measure was modified slightly in 2002-03 to include a definition of lifelong learning. Before 2002-03, respondents were asked about their satisfaction that "adults taking education or training are being taught an appropriate combination of skills to prepare them for lifelong learning." In 2002-03, "lifelong learning" was replaced with "learning throughout their lifetime."
- See Endnote A, page 52-55, for information on survey conducted for Alberta Learning.
- See Endnote B, page 56-57, for information on assessment of results over time.

**High School to Post-secondary Transition Rate (new core measure starting 2004/05)**




**Source:** Alberta Learning

**Notes:**

- Students are considered to be attending post-secondary if they are enrolled in a public or private post-secondary institution in Alberta or registered in an apprenticeship program in Alberta. Adjustments for attrition and attending post-secondary out of province based on estimates are applied in calculating the transition rates.
- The transition year is noted in the columns in the graph.
- See Endnote C, High School to Post-secondary Transition Rate, page 58-62.

## GOAL 2 CORE MEASURES

### Preparation for Employment

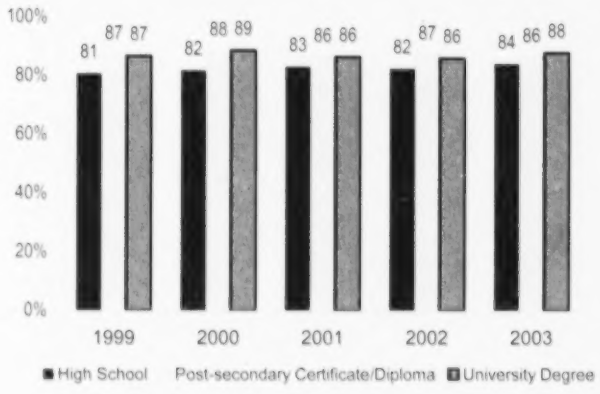
**TARGET**

- No target was set in the 2003-06 Business Plan for this new methodology for employment rates.

**DISCUSSION**

- The employment rates of Albertans aged 25-34 are high for all three types of learning system graduates.
- Employment rates for high school graduates have increased from 81% to 84% over the past few years.
- Employment rates for post-secondary graduates remain high at 86% for certificate and diploma graduates and at 88% for degree graduates.
- Employment rates are consistently higher for post-secondary graduates than for high school graduates. Post-secondary graduates typically have developed more job-related skills than high school graduates.
- A new methodology has been selected to report on employment outcomes of a fuller range of learning system graduates. In prior years, employment rates from surveys conducted every second year of recent graduates of Alberta's universities, colleges and technical institutes were reported (not including apprenticeship graduates). See Alberta Learning's Annual Report for 2002/03 for information on employment rates of post-secondary graduates from previous surveys.
- Employer satisfaction with learning system graduates has been added as a measure of preparation for employment in Alberta Learning's business plan for 2004-07.
- Results on this new measure have been stable since this question was added to the biennial employer survey.

**Employment Rates of Albertans aged 25-34 (new methodology)**

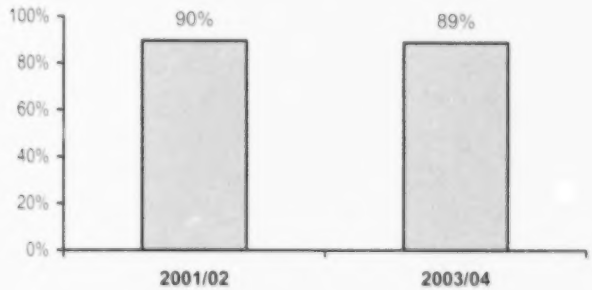



**Source:** Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey; Special Tabulation for Alberta Learning.

**Notes:**

- The post-secondary certificate/diploma category includes apprenticeship graduates.
- See Endnote C, page 62, for information on the Labour Force Survey.
- See Endnote B, pages 56-57, for information on the use of confidence intervals to interpret results over time.

**Employer Satisfaction with the Skills of Recent Learning System Graduates (new core measure starting 2004/05)**




**Source:** Alberta Learning; Environics West – 2002, Environics Research Group – 2004.

**Notes:**

- Learning system graduates includes high school, apprenticeship, certificate, diploma and degree graduates.
- Employer surveys are conducted every other year.
- See Endnote A, pages 52-55, for information on surveys conducted for Alberta Learning.

## Preparation for Citizenship

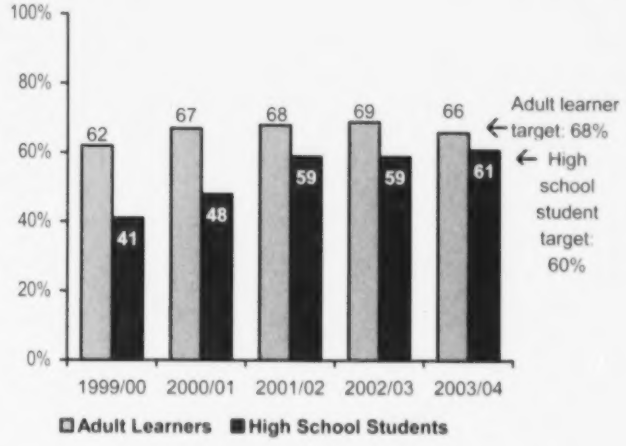
**TARGET:**

- The target for high school students was met.
- The target for adult learners was met, as the result is within 5% of the target.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Public satisfaction that high school students are well prepared for citizenship has been relatively stable the last three years, following significant increases in 2000/01 and 2001/02.
- Public satisfaction that adult learners are well prepared for citizenship increased in 2000/01, and has been relatively stable since then.

**Public Satisfaction that Learners are Well Prepared for Citizenship**




**Sources**: Alberta Learning: Criterion Research Corp. – 2000, 2001; R.A. Malatest & Associates – 2002, 2003; Compustat Consultants Inc. – 2004.

**Notes:**

- The questions were clarified in the 2001/02 survey as a result of field testing. The new questions asked the public to indicate how satisfied they are that recent high school graduates are well prepared for citizenship, and how satisfied they are that adults taking education or training are well prepared for citizenship.
- In prior years, the public was asked to indicate if they agreed that high school graduates in Alberta were being taught the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and if they agreed that adult learners are getting an appropriate combination of skills and knowledge to prepare them for the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- See Endnote A, pages 52-55, for other information on surveys conducted for Alberta Learning.

# Goal 3 – Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry

OUTCOMES

✓ Met target

Results from base year for measures without targets or not meeting targets (taking the confidence interval into account):

= No change

↑ Improved performance

↓ Performance decline

**In support of this goal in 2003/04:**

- The Ministry provided $65 million for the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) projects.
- In response to increasing utility costs, provided one-time grants of $30 million for operations and maintenance to post-secondary institutions.
- To allocate as much funding as possible to programs for learners, the Ministry endeavors to keep support costs as low as possible, while still maintaining high quality services. Ministry Support Services costs were under budget by almost $1 million.
- The Ministry provided $31 million through the Student Health Initiative for health-related support services to enable students with health needs to benefit from school.
- Addressing the need for a highly-skilled staff, the Ministry allocated over $430,000 for training Alberta Learning staff; including funding for tuition, bursaries and internal and external training sessions.

Goal 3 has two outcomes: improved results through effective working relationships on Cross-ministry Initiatives and with stakeholders; and the Ministry demonstrates leadership and continuous improvement. There are two Ministry core measures, and targets were met for both. Achievement of results for the core measures reflects a cumulative amount of effort and funding over a number of years, rather than relating solely to funding for the 2003/04 fiscal year. The following are the 2003/04 performance highlights for this goal.

## PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

**Partner and Stakeholder Satisfaction**

✓ **Collaboration** – The percentage of partners and stakeholders who agree that Alberta Learning staff are collaborative has increased to 89%.

✓ **Responsiveness and Flexibility** – The percentage of partners and stakeholders who agree that Alberta Learning staff are responsive and flexible has increased to 87%.

Note: A roll-up core measure of overall learning system performance is under development for this goal.

## Working Relationships

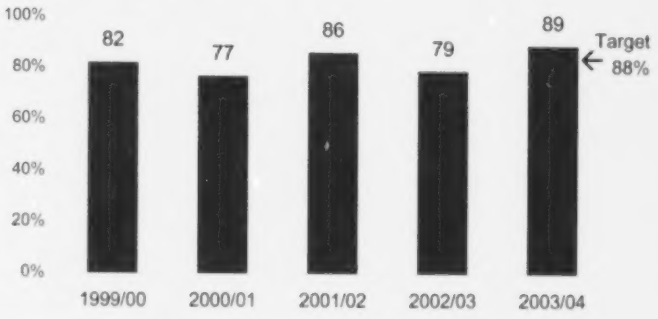
**TARGET:**

- Targets were met.

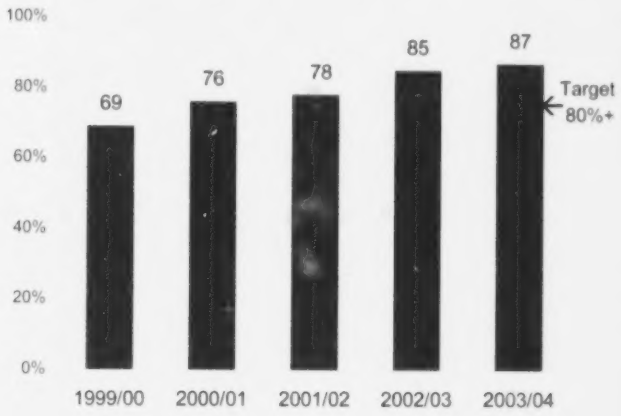
**DISCUSSION:**

- In 2003/04, a very large majority of partners and stakeholders agreed that Alberta Learning staff are collaborative (89%).
- Also in 2003/04, a large majority of partners and stakeholders agreed that Alberta Learning staff are responsive and flexible (87%).
- Since 1999/2000, results have improved substantially for both measures.
- There is greater variability in results from year to year for this measure than for other survey measures because of the small sample sizes.

**Percentages of Cross-ministry Partners and Learning System Stakeholders who Agree that Alberta Learning Staff are Collaborative**




**Percentages of Cross-ministry Partners and Learning System Stakeholders who Agree that Alberta Learning Staff are Responsive and Flexible**




**Source:** Alberta Learning; Hargroup Management Consultants Inc. – 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004.

**Notes:**

- The survey scale was changed in 2002/03 from a 5-point scale including a neutral midpoint, used in prior years, to a 4-point scale with no neutral midpoint (i.e., strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Overall, this had the effect of increasing both the strongly agree/agree and the disagree/strongly disagree responses, compared to results for previous years. In years prior to 2002/03, the question on flexibility had substantially more neutral responses than the questions on responsiveness or collaboration. With the change in scale, there were more "don't know" responses for collaborative in 2002/03 and for flexible in 2003/04 than the other attributes.
- Results for 2002/03 were restated to include 'don't know' in the denominator, consistent with the calculation of other survey measures. Overall, this recalculation had more effect in the collaborative results, reflecting a larger number of "don't know" responses for that attribute than for the others in that year.
- See Endnote A, pages 52-55, for information on surveys conducted for Alberta Learning.

# Financial Results and Performance

Financial results of the Ministry of Learning for the year ended March 31, 2004 include the activities of the Department of Learning and the Alberta School Foundation Fund. More detailed information can be found in the Ministry's financial statements in the 2003/04 Annual Report, online at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/annualreport.

(in millions)

| | 2003/04 Budget | 2003/04 Actual | 2002/03 Actual |
|---|---|---|---|
| **REVENUES** | | | |
| School property taxes | $ 1,165 | $ 1,178 | $ 1,113 |
| Internal government transfers | 138 | 139 | 105 |
| Transfers from Government of Canada | 142 | 188 | 115 |
| Sales of Learning Resources | 31 | 35 | 26 |
| Fees, permits, licences and other revenue | 9 | 14 | 11 |
| | 1,485 | 1,554 | 1,370 |
| **EXPENSES BY FUNCTION** | | | |
| Education[1] | $ 5,035 | $ 5,106 | $ 4,827 |
| Economic Development | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Debt Servicing Costs | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| | 5,043 | 5,113 | 4,834 |
| **NET OPERATING RESULTS** | $ (3,558) | $ (3,559) | $ (3,464) |

1. Education includes teachers' pension valuation adjustment (2003/04 Budget: $127 million; 2003/04 Actual: $130 million; 2002/03 Actual: $75 million)

## OVERVIEW

Reflecting the Government of Alberta's ongoing commitment to Learning, support to the learning system continued to increase in 2003/04. Investment in Learning increased $279 million (5.8%). Approximately 94% of the Ministry's expenses were comprised of grants to provide programs and help Alberta's learners. At $28.6 million, Ministry Support Services were kept below budget by almost $1 million and represent only 0.56% of the Ministry's expenses.

In Basic Learning, support increased $226 million. Additional contributions were made to school jurisdictions through grant rate increases and to address Alberta Commission on Learning recommendations. Also included are costs relating to the Teachers' Pension, which increased $10 million from the prior year.

Support for Adult Learning increased $46 million from the prior year. Operating grants to post-secondary institutions increased $98 million, while scholarships and bursaries increased over $8 million. These increases were offset by a decrease in the provision for the future cost of student loans and a one-time recognition of a loan repayable for the University of Calgary research facility in 2002/03. The provincial government disbursed $87.6 million in student loans in 2003/04. Alberta student loan relief programs continued to reduce debt automatically for students in their first and final years of study, providing $84.4 million in debt reduction in 2003/04.

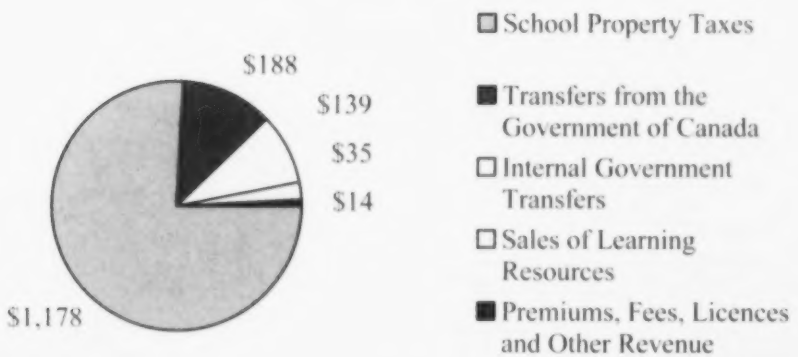
Acknowledging the need for skilled trades people in Alberta, the Ministry increased Access funding by $7 million (24%) to increase the number of seats available in apprenticeship programs.

**REVENUES**

Revenue for the Ministry of Learning totaled $1,554 million for 2003/04 from the following sources:

- $1,178 million in provincial education property taxes, which were collected by the provincial government through the Alberta School Foundation Fund.
- $139 million was received through internal government transfers, including:
  - Almost $117 million from the Lottery Fund; and
  - $22 million from the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund.
- $188 million in revenue was received in transfers from the Government of Canada, including:
  - $187 million in Canada Health and Social Transfers; and
  - $1 million in support of Canada Student Loans administration.
- $35 million in revenues was related to the sale and distribution of learning and teaching resources that have been purchased directly from publishers or developed and printed by the Ministry.
- $14 million in revenues were generated from various programs such as marketing apprenticeship, high school transcripts, teacher certification fees, as well as other income sources such as investment income.

**Revenues by Source**
**(in millions)**




**Comparison of 2003/04 actuals to budget**

Revenues were $69 million higher than budgeted as a result of the following:

- $46 million more than expected in Canada Health and Social Transfer revenue;
- $13 million more than budgeted in provincial education property taxes;
- $4 million higher than anticipated sales of learning and teaching resources; and

- $6 million in increases over budget in other areas including Heritage Scholarship Fund revenue, premiums, fees and licenses and refunds of prior year expenses.

**Comparison of 2003/04 actuals to prior year**

Revenues for the Ministry increased $184 million from 2002/03. The increases were spread across the Ministry's revenue sources:

- The Ministry's share of Canada Health and Social Transfers from the federal government has increased $73 million after a dip in the prior year.
- Provincial Education Property Taxes increased $65 million due to an increase in the assessment base.
- Lottery fund contributions were increased by $32 million including additional funding for transportation and school technology upgrading.
- Sales of learning resources increased $9 million.
- Revenue associated with the distribution of Heritage Scholarships increased by over $1 million.
- Other revenue including investment income and refunds of prior year expenses increased approximately $4 million.

**EXPENSES**

| | (in millions) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 2003/04 | | 2002/03 |
| | Budget | Actual | Actual |
| **MINISTRY EXPENSES BY CORE BUSINESS**[1] | | | |
| Basic Learning[2] | $ 3,718 | $ 3,769 | $ 3,543 |
| Adult Learning[3] | 1,305 | 1,308 | 1,262 |
| Apprenticeship and Industry Training | 20 | 36 | 29 |
| Total Ministry Expenses | $ 5,043 | $ 5,113 | $ 4,834 |

1. Ministry Support Services costs of $28.6 million (2002/03 - $27.6 million) have been allocated to core businesses based on proportion of total expenses.
2. Basic Learning amount includes teachers' pension valuation adjustment. (2003/04 Budget: $127 million; 2003/04 Actual: $130 million; 2002/03 Actual: $75 million)
3. Includes operating grants provided to post-secondary institutions used but not specifically earmarked for apprenticeship and industry training.

Directly incurred expenses for the Ministry of Learning were $5,113 million for 2003/04, allocated to core businesses as follows:

- Approximately $3,769 million in expenses related to Basic Learning:
  - $3,200 million paid in Operating Support to Public and Separate School Boards offset by $163 million in amounts for opted-out school boards;
  - Teachers' pension costs of $385 million for the year;
  - Support for private schools, including early childhood services, totaling $111 million;

- Provincial Initiatives support of approximately $65 million, specifically the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement;
- $31 million in expenses incurred to support student health;
- $41 million paid to support other basic learning programs including the production and delivery of learning and teaching resources;
- A one-time Learning Resource Grant of $20 million to enable school jurisdictions to make additional purchases through the Learning Resources Centre;
- Program delivery support of $55 million and an additional $21.1 million, which is Basic Learning's share of the expenses presented under Ministry Support Services; and
- $3 million in debt servicing costs incurred by the Alberta School Foundation Fund.

- Approximately $1,308 million in expenses related to Adult Learning:
  - $995 million in operating assistance for post-secondary institutions;
  - $112 million in additional support to increase the accessibility of post-secondary programs;
  - $30 million in one-time operations and maintenance grants to post-secondary institutions;
  - $10 million in one-time Performance Envelope funding and $6 million in other program support;
  - $89 million in support to post-secondary learners in the form of scholarships, bursaries, Maintenance Grants and Student Loan Relief Benefit;
  - System support and a provision for future costs on existing loans totaling $24 million; and
  - Program delivery support of $35 million and an additional $7.3 million, which is Adult Learning's share of the expenses presented under Ministry Support Services.

- Approximately $36 million in expenses related to Apprenticeship and Industry Training:
  - Expenses of $13 million to deliver apprenticeship programs;
  - $20 million in grants to post-secondary institutions to increase access and to enhance apprenticeship technical training programs;
  - Marketing apprenticeship expenses of $3 million; and
  - Apprenticeship and Industry Training's share of expenses presented under Ministry Support Services was $0.2 million.

**Comparison of 2003/04 actuals to budget**

Expenses were $70 million higher than budgeted as a result of the following:

- $51 million more than budgeted for support to Basic Learning consisting of:
  - $37 million more than budgeted to support Learning Commission recommendations;
  - $17 million in additional support to schools for more than expected returning Grade 12 students, increased support for students with severe disabilities and other enrolment-driven increases;
  - $5 million in additional expenses for Basic Learning in Student Health and program delivery;
  - $3 million in additional costs associated with increased sales of learning resources;
  - $1 million higher than anticipated private school funding offset by:
  - $10 million lower than expected teachers' pension expenses primarily due to decreased current and past service contributions as a result of fewer than anticipated teachers in the system;
  - $1 million lower than anticipated grants for the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement; and

- $1 million below budget for debt servicing costs.

- $3 million over budget in Adult Learning comprised of:
  - $30 million for unbudgeted, one-time operations and maintenance grants;
  - $3 million more for Access Fund to increase the number of post-secondary seats offset by:
    - A lower than expected provision for the liability for student loans by $21 million; and
    - Lower than expected program support costs of $9 million.

- $16 million more than budgeted for Apprenticeship and Industry Training Access grants provided to post-secondary institutions.

**Comparison of 2003/04 actuals to prior year**

Across Learning's core businesses, spending increased $279 million over 2002/03. This is a result of:

- Increases totaling $226 million in Basic Learning from the following:
  - Increased support for public and separate schools totaling $187 million for:
    - Operating support grant rate increases of 3% for the 2002/03 school year and an additional 2% for the 2003/04 school year;
    - $20 million for school technology upgrading;
    - $37 million in response to Alberta Commission on Learning recommendations; and
    - Increased funding for early childhood services and students with severe disabilities.
  - Increased Teachers' Pension costs of approximately $71 million related to additional past and current service contributions and additional provision for the unfunded liability. This was offset by a prior year one-time payment on behalf of teachers toward the unfunded liability of $60 million;
  - $20 million in one-time Learning Resource Grants to help school jurisdictions purchase additional learning resources; and
  - $15 million in other Basic Learning programs including increased demand for learning and teaching resources and program delivery support;
  - Offset by a decrease in a one-time funding to the Calgary Board of Education of $7 million in 2002/03 to cover unique benefit costs.
- Increases totaling $46 million in Adult Learning due to the following:
  - $30 million in one-time operations and maintenance grants was provided to post-secondary institutions.
  - In addition to rolling faculty retention and equity adjustments into operating grants, an additional $28 million increase in operating grants was provided to post-secondary institutions.
  - An increase to Access funding of $23 million was provided to increase the number of seats in certain post-secondary programs, not including Access Fund grants for apprenticeship.
  - $10 million in additional support was provided to adult learners in the form of Maintenance Grants, Heritage Scholarships, Student Loan Relief and systems support.
  - A further $10 million in one-time Performance Envelope grants was awarded to post-secondary institutions.
  - These increases were offset by:

- A reduction due to a $31 million one-time expense in 2002/03 for the commitment to repay a loan entered into by the University of Calgary for a research facility;
- A $21 million reduction in the provision for student loans; and
- A further decrease of $3 million primarily due to a reduction in program delivery expenses.

- Increases totaling $7 million in Apprenticeship and Industry Training were primarily due to increased grants to post-secondary institutions earmarked for apprenticeship and industry training initiatives.

**GRANTS**

Grants accounted for $4,802 million (94%) of the total amount of the Ministry's expenses.

- Grants to school boards totaled $3,129 million and consisted of:
  - Approximately $3,197 million in instruction and support block funding and other enrolment-driven funding offset by $163 million school property taxes already collected by opted-out separate school boards, who have the authority to requisition and collect levies on their residential and non-residential properties;
  - $64 million in grants for the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement; and
  - $31 million for the Student Health program.
- Grants to post-secondary institutions totaled $1,174 million and consisted of:
  - $990 million in operating and conditional grant funding;
  - $132 million to support program expansion through the Access Fund; and
  - $52 million in other funding initiatives including Inmate Programs and Community Adult Learning programs provided through post-secondary institutions.
- Grants to adult learners totaled $103 million and were comprised of:
  - $67 million in assistance to learners in the form of student loan relief benefits, Maintenance Grants, Alberta Opportunities Bursaries, achievement and other scholarships;
  - $22 million in scholarships funded through the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund; and
  - $14 million as a provision for the future cost of student loans for remissions, interest and loan guarantees.
- Other grants in the amount of $396 million included:
  - Grants to the teachers' pension of $135 million for current service and $120 million for past service;
  - $116 million in financial assistance to private schools for early childhood services and instruction grants; and
  - $25 million in grants for other areas including agencies providing community education programs and learning television.

# Looking Ahead: Opportunities and Challenges for Alberta's Learning System

Education is increasingly being recognized as facilitating and securing economic growth, societal prosperity and healthy communities, thereby improving the standard of living. For Alberta to continue to prosper, emphasis should continue to be placed on ensuring access to early childhood education, successful completion of Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12), smooth transitions to post-secondary learning and participation in lifelong learning.

Alberta is recognized nationally and internationally for the excellence of its learning system. To sustain and improve upon this excellence, and to ensure Albertans are prepared for success in the knowledge economy, Alberta Learning, its partners and its stakeholders will continue to enhance the capacity of the system to respond to significant environmental influences and learner needs.

### Providing a Strong Foundation for Children and Youth

One priority of the learning system is to meet the basic educational needs of children and youth and enable them to fully benefit from school. This is a responsibility shared between parents and Alberta Learning along with its partners and stakeholders. It is critical that children enter school ready to learn. For Alberta's youth to take full advantage of opportunities beyond basic learning and be prepared to compete on the global stage, well-rounded preparation for further learning, work and community participation is essential. Opportunities and challenges include:

- Optimizing early childhood development and basic education to build a strong foundation of cognitive, physical, emotional and spiritual health, along with fundamental skills and knowledge that will enable the full participation of all Albertans in lifelong learning.
- Addressing literacy issues for all age groups in Alberta, as literacy is a basic foundation for all learning and for success in a knowledge-based society.
- Promoting completion of high school to encourage advancement, as high school academic achievement and completion are strong predictors of post-secondary success and employment.
- Enhancing transitions to employment and further study for learners by providing barrier-free pathways for Albertans to be successful lifelong learners.
- Enhancing evidence-based decision-making capabilities by developing new ways of collecting and assessing data and information about learners and the learning system.

### Ensuring High Quality Learning Opportunities for All

Learners and learning stakeholders have rising expectations for a choice-filled, high-quality, and safe learning system. Adding to these challenges, Alberta continues to face significant demographic trends, including a growing senior population, an aging workforce, increasing Aboriginal youth population, students with special needs, classroom diversity, and shifts in rural and urban populations. Opportunities and challenges include:

- Working with partners and stakeholders to implement the government-approved recommendations from Alberta's Commission on Learning and provisions of the *Post-secondary Learning Act*.
- Devising innovative ways to consult with Albertans to obtain their input on priorities for the lifelong learning system.
- Working with communities to address the learning needs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children and youth, enhancing current levels of educational attainment among Aboriginal youth.
- Collaborating with partners and stakeholders to assess trends, needs, best practices, and the opportunities and challenges of learning technology.

- Clarifying roles and responsibilities among the Ministry, learning providers and learners on planning and implementing improvements in the use of technology.
- Enhancing lifelong learning opportunities for Albertans through electronic access to learning resources and multimedia learning materials.
- Ensuring that programming, curriculum and instructor preparation keep pace with rapid technological advances.
- Attracting and retaining teachers and faculty, especially in the areas of math, science, second languages and post-secondary education, as improving regional economies and demographic shifts increase competition for human resources.
- Working with partners and stakeholders to respond to the needs of learners entering the system from outside Alberta and Canada.
- Enhancing education delivery methods to assist rural communities in maintaining quality service levels.

### Preparing a Highly Knowledgeable and Skilled Workforce

Knowledge, innovation and education tend to be correlated with economic and societal prosperity. With the emphasis on ideas, communication and innovation in today's economy, education and lifelong learning are more important than ever for success, both individually and as a society. It is expected that future labour market demand will continue to be weighted toward jobs requiring post-secondary education or training. In addition, the need for knowledge, skills and training are increasing in positions that traditionally have had minimal requirements in these areas in response to new technologies, safety issues and customer service expectations. Opportunities and challenges include:

- Fostering recognition of learning as an investment in the future of individuals and the province as a whole.
- Ensuring that a wide range of initiatives and programs are in place and publicized to support learning across the stages of life.
- Improving participation in second language learning in recognition of its impact on intellectual development, academic achievement, first language skills, citizenship and the economy.
- Developing strategies to encourage continuation to post-secondary learning to ensure Albertans are prepared to participate in and benefit from the knowledge-based economy.
- Enhancing awareness of rising workplace skill requirements and skill development opportunities, of the affordability of post-secondary education, and of the financial support available to access post-secondary education.
- Developing strategies to address industry's need for a highly skilled and trained workforce, especially in areas of expected skill shortages.
- Responding to industry requests for designating new trades and occupations to ensure that employers have the skilled workers they require and that high standards of training are maintained.

### Sustainability of the Learning System

In addition to the question of how to maintain high quality, relevant, accessible and affordable learning opportunities is the issue of how to sustain the learning infrastructure in the long term. Parents are expressing a desire to have greater input into decision-making on educational policies and their children's educational choices. Business and industry are demanding more relevant training with increasing standards. Trends are towards increasingly individualized, learner-centred instruction. An additional aspect resulting from the increased public demand for lifelong learning is an environment where education potentially becomes a competitive business sector.

This increases the learner's choices; however, accountability for quality of education may be compromised unless government plays a role to ensure that accessible, affordable and quality education is maintained. Various demands are being placed on the learning system, which is striving to adapt while sustaining itself over the long term. Opportunities and challenges include:

- Ensuring adequate province-wide investment is provided for while maintaining financial sustainability of the learning system.
- Ensuring Alberta's learning system has the ability to adjust programming and curriculum to keep pace with the changes inherent in the fast-paced changing environment.
- Developing an overall strategy to sustain the learning infrastructure in the long term while maintaining its flexibility to adapt to changing needs.
- Reviewing the government's role in ensuring that accessible, affordable and quality education is maintained in the increasingly competitive education sector.
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities for accountability among the federal government, the provincial government, learning providers and learners.

The Ministry's business plan for 2004-07 contains strategies that address these opportunities and challenges through ongoing work with Alberta Learning's partners and stakeholders.

# 6. Appendices

## Summary of Accomplishments - Alberta Learning Business Plan
## April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004

Presented below are Alberta Learning's accomplishments for 2003/04 in implementing the Ministry's Business Plan for 2003-06. These are organized by the goals and strategies of the business plan. Many of these accomplishments also address the strategic priorities of the Ministry for 2003/04, which are:

- continuous improvement of the learning system;
- labour market demands and sharing/creating knowledge;
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner success;
- collaboration with partners and stakeholders; and
- financial sustainability of the learning system.

**Strategy 1A: Continue to promote learning excellence through the continuous improvement of the learning system.**

- Invested an additional $20 million to support pre-school and Kindergarten children with special needs, to accommodate the increased number of students returning to complete or upgrade Grade 12, and to provide educational supports for students in government institutional programs such as group homes and treatment centres for youth.
- Approved a new language initiative to make learning a second language a requirement for students in Grades four through nine. Beginning in 2006/07, Alberta students in Grades four through nine will be required to learn one of these languages: Chinese, Cree, French, German, Japanese, Punjabi, Spanish, and Ukrainian.
- Approved the following new Programs of Study for implementation: German Language and Culture 7-8-9, 10-20-30 and 10S-20S-30S; Italian Language and Culture 10-20-30; Spanish Language Arts K-3; Spanish Language and Culture 7-8-9, 10-20-30, and 10S-20S-30S; and Ukrainian Language Arts K-9.
- Initiated a collaborative exchange relationship between Alberta and the state of Jalisco, Mexico to support second-language learning and training.
- Redeveloped social studies curriculum, with an increased focus on Canadian and Albertan history, citizenship, and First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures. The revised curriculum will be implemented beginning in 2005 with Kindergarten to Grade 3.
- Implemented strategies to address the goals of the Renewed Vision for the K-12 curriculum, focusing on areas relating to primary programs (K-3), daily physical activity, second language learning and Individualized Learning Career Pathways.
- Held consultations in Grande Prairie, Red Deer, Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat on the Daily Physical Activity (DPA) Initiative. Over 400 stakeholders participated, including teachers, administrators, health professionals and representatives of sports and recreation organizations. Daily physical activity will be phased in over three years, and will increase student activity levels and healthy behaviours, with mandatory implementation of 30 minutes/day starting in September 2005 for Grades 1-9 and in September 2006 for high school. Schools may chose to implement DPA in the 2004/05 school year.
- Enhanced the interface of the Grade 9 science e-text in response to feedback from teachers, students and parents, as part of a three-year research study in collaboration with publishers.
- Trained 57 additional school teams and 88 coaches in using the Effective Behaviour Supports (EBS) process for a total of 249 school teams and 121 coaches since the introduction of EBS in 2001/02.
- Held the Third Annual Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) Conference in January 2004 that highlighted effective school improvement practices and strategies for integrating these practices into new

projects as part of the second three-year cycle of AISI projects.

- Updated the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement Clearinghouse website with a series of new promising practices from school jurisdictions.
- Provided technical and administrative support to the Alberta Commission on Learning (ACOL).
- Accepted the vast majority of the 95 recommendations contained in the ACOL report: *Every child learns. Every child succeeds*, and developed implementation plans for the accepted recommendations. Many of the recommendations supported work underway within government and among school boards.
- Launched a process for policy development to support government-approved recommendations from ACOL.
- Developed a framework to implement the recommendations from the Members of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Lifelong Learning based on consultation with Government of Alberta ministries, aligning the framework with ACOL recommendations.
- Conducted an impact study of year-round schooling options on student achievement.
- Conducted a review of Quebec's results in international and national assessments to identify factors contributing to strong performance with a particular focus on the subject of Mathematics, as this is a priority area for Alberta schools.
- Introduced Bill 25, the *School Amendment Act*, and Bill 26, the *Teaching Profession Amendment Act*, the government's response to recommendations of Alberta's Commission on Learning related to the teaching profession.
- Renewed a five-year Memorandum of Agreement with the five teacher preparation institutions in Alberta, whereby deans confirm to the Minister that teachers have the required knowledge, skills and attributes for interim certification.
- Completed an assessment of the six Regional Professional Development Consortia. These facilitate professional development for teachers and other staff involved in Alberta's basic education system. The review found a high level of support for the goals and activities of the Consortia.
- Established guidelines and criteria for the identification of Small Schools by Necessity and worked with Alberta Infrastructure to ensure that they are included in the capital projects plan. Small Schools by Necessity exist when the distance between schools of the same jurisdiction is such that transporting students to other schools is not practical.
- Maintained a high level of satisfaction (86%) among employers with apprenticeship technical training curriculum.
- Maintained a high level of apprentice graduate satisfaction (89%) with alternative delivery of technical training. Supported alternative delivery approaches for apprentices through development and marketing of Individual Learning Modules (ILMs). Implemented modules for electrician trade and continued work on modules for the carpenter and plumber trades. In 2003/04, approximately 600,000 ILMs were ordered, including 15% of them from outside Alberta. ILMs facilitate flexibility and standardization in training.
- Completed the implementation of new record books to improve the consistency of on-the-job training. Record books track an apprentice's progression through on-the-job training and encourage the development of a broad base of skills.
- Reported on the Survey of 2001/02 Graduates of Apprenticeship and used the results to inform policy and program development.
- Reorganized and updated the Private Vocational Training Regulation. Revisions to the regulation include enhancing the significance of Class A and Class B status of licensed vocational programs and requiring

distance learning training to meet the same requirements as training delivered on-site.

- Completed consultations and established regulations for the Campus Alberta Quality Council, which will facilitate the development and expansion of degree-granting opportunities for learners.
- Passed and proclaimed Bill 43, the *Post-secondary Learning Act*, setting the stage for increased access to high-quality degree opportunities through a more adaptable and seamless post-secondary system. The legislation combined and updated four previous acts that each governed a separate area of the system: The *Universities Act*, the *Colleges Act*, the *Technical Institutes Act* and the *Banff Centre Act*.
- Enhanced on-line access to post-secondary education, and created spaces for 692 more students at Alberta's post-secondary institutions in the fields of health sciences, Aboriginal teaching, management and apprenticeship technical training through a $30 million boost to the Access Fund.
- Accredited six new degree programs to be offered by private institutions, through authorization by Order in Council.

**Strategy 1B: Ensure the learning system is responsive to labour market demands and supports the creation and sharing of knowledge.**

- In response to industry needs, provided $20 million to post-secondary technical training providers to maintain an additional 5,780 apprenticeship spaces and enhance technical training equipment and facilities.
- Maintained a high level of satisfaction of employers (95%) and apprenticeship graduates (93%) with the quality of services received from Apprenticeship and Industry Training staff.
- Provided registration and counselling services to apprentices and employers and monitored compliance through a total of 13,154 shop visits.
- Developed a strategic framework in consultation with over 40 stakeholders for integrating skilled immigrants into the Alberta economy, including employees, post-secondary institutions and occupational credentialing bodies.
- Added 400 nominations for skilled immigrants to the Provincial Nominee Program, allowing Alberta to nominate a total of 800 candidates over the course of the agreement.
- Signed international student processing and work permit agreements in support of the Alberta International Education Strategy.
- Concluded two foreign student agreements: the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Priority Processing of International Students and the Agreement on Post-Graduation Employment for Foreign Students. Both agreements support the Alberta International Education Strategy and labour force strategy, *Prepared for Growth*.
- Responded to industry requests for new designations of trades and occupations. Progress includes reviewing the following applications:
  - designation of oil and gas driller as a compulsory certification trade from the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors (CAODC);
  - designation of six groups of occupations from the Petroleum Services Association of Canada (PSAC);
  - designation of natural gas compression technician as a compulsory certification trade;
  - designation of structural steel and plate fitter to a compulsory certification trade from an optional trade.
- Continued to market Alberta's expertise in apprenticeship and industry training internationally and maintain services to international clients. Collaborated with representatives from Bermuda's government and industry to help them develop a national certification system based on Alberta's apprenticeship and industry training model.

- Signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Saxony (Germany), Denmark, Vietnam, and China to share Alberta Learning's expertise and assist them in enhancing their learning systems.
- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Energy Skills Centre Trinidad and Tobago to formalize the relationship with Alberta Learning with respect to the development of industry standards and training and certification for worker mobility.
- Arranged visits for Minister-led delegations from Saxony, Basque (Spain) and Jalisco (Mexico) and coordinated Ministerial missions to Vietnam, Ireland and Sweden.

**Strategy 1C: Continue to develop a learning system that integrates new learning technologies.**

- Received Standing Policy Committee approval for the *Learning and Technology Policy Framework*. Developed a learning and technology research strategy in consultation with Ministry staff and stakeholders.
- Established the Technology Standards and Solutions initiative to identify and share standards and best practices on the use of technology to enhance the delivery of programs and improve learning.
- Increased the amount of digital content posted on the LearnAlberta.ca website, including French resources, the National Geographic Science Centre, and other resources in support of the curriculum. Launched the new English and French interfaces for LearnAlberta.ca, which support search/browse capabilities.
- Developed the LearnAlberta.ca Content Delivery Device solution and initiated a pilot, with full deployment anticipated by Fall 2004.
- Initiated videoconferencing research pilot projects in various areas of the province.
- Supported a variety of learning and technology professional development partnership initiatives, including the TELUS Learning Connection, Galileo Educational Network, Alberta Online Consortium's Information and Communication Technology in High School Learning program, Edmonton Public Schools' Leadership Link initiative, and Palliser Technology Leadership Needs Assessment.
- Provided information on the Technology Standards and Solutions initiative to identify and share standards and best practices on the use of technology to enhance the delivery of programs and improve learning.
- Provided guidance and support to stakeholders and partners on SuperNet implementation. In partnership with NAIT, SuperNet IT training course development was completed.
- Provided support for the Alberta Computers for Schools Program, which has distributed almost 50,000 computers to schools and libraries since 1993.

**Strategy 1D: Develop a learning system that maximizes accountability to Albertans by identifying common desired outcomes for the learning system.**

- Began implementing outcomes and measures for the Kindergarten to Grade 12 learning system as defined by the Review Committee on Outcomes in provincial surveys of parents, high school students, teachers and the public.
- Conducted field validation of the following Integrated Occupational Programs: English Language Arts, Grades 8-12; Mathematics, Grades 8-11; Science, Grades 8-11; Social Studies, Grades 8-11; Occupational Courses, Grades 8 and 9.
- Completed draft tests for field validation of Grade 9 student performance in Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies in the Integrated Occupational Program.
- In response to stakeholder expectations for a written component in all diploma examinations, re-designed the Mathematics and Science diploma examinations to include a separate written response portion.

- Designed a methodology and phased approach to ensure that diploma examinations are comparable from year to year. Implementation began with Social Studies 30 and 33.
- Released high school drop-out rates of students aged 14-18 and returning rates of youth who dropped out the previous year to school jurisdictions and the public for the first time.
- Reviewed school jurisdictions for compliance with Credit Enrolment Unit (CEU) funding guidelines.
- With NorQuest College, initiated development of measures for services such as library, registration, computer services and counselling.
- Launched the Beyond MIRS (Management Information Reporting Schedules) Pilot Project with six school boards to assess the usefulness of grade level achievement data for program evaluation at the classroom, school, jurisdictional and provincial levels.

**Strategy 2A: Improve First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner success.**

- Supported initial implementation of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) School-Community Learning Environment Project with 16 pilot school jurisdictions to improve the success of FNMI learners attending provincial schools by increasing attendance, retention, achievement and high school completion rates.
- Developed the Student Guide for Aboriginal People and the Guide for Counsellors and Educators and distributed them to 1,346 schools and counselling centres.
- Established and co-chaired the Alberta Learning – Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) – Aboriginal organization to identify priority projects for on-reserve education.
- Co-chaired with INAC the Education sub-committee of the Canada/Alberta/Aboriginal Partnership Forum to identify priority projects for on-reserve education.
- Trained 29 Aboriginal people to provide facilitator training or to be facilitators to deliver Aboriginal Literacy and Parenting Skills Programs. Training and family literacy resources that are sensitive to Aboriginal people were provided to 150 home visitors.
- Continued to infuse the Aboriginal perspective into English Language Arts, Health/CALM/ Physical Education, Mathematics and Science programs.
- Exceeded initial target of 45 registered Aboriginal apprentices in the three pilot areas of Edmonton, Fort McMurray and High Level for the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project, resulting in 70 registered apprentices participating in 17 different trades.
- Worked with learning stakeholders, industry and Aboriginal organizations to increase Aboriginal awareness and participation in the apprenticeship and industry training system. As of March 30, 2004, there were 688 registered Aboriginal apprentices.
- Developed informational and promotional materials for Aboriginal audiences to increase their awareness and assist them to make choices about career opportunities in the trades through The Aboriginal Communication Strategy. Copies of the *Step Into the Trades* guides for counsellors and educators have been distributed to 1,346 schools and counselling centres.
- Provided presentations on careers in the trades to more than 1,000 junior and senior high school students. Met with members of the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium to provide information regarding licensing of vocational training programs under the *Private Vocational Schools Act* and identify licensing issues that may arise for member institutions.
- Approved several Aboriginal-specific initiatives through the Access Fund to increase access and participation of Aboriginal population, including Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, Aboriginal Teacher (Niitsotapi) Education and the Teacher Assistant Program.

- Reviewed and approved 100% of First Nations School Program Declaration forms that ensure Band-Operated Schools' compliance with government requirements.
- Implemented Aboriginal Learner Data Collection Initiative, requiring public schools and post-secondary institutions to include a voluntary ancestry question on registration forms.

**Strategy 2B: Continue to improve learning opportunities for Albertans by enhancing transitions to work and further study for learners.**

- Worked with schools, employers and organization such as CAREERS: The Next Generation, Skills Canada and others to communicate career paths in the trades and benefits to high school students resulting in 891 new high school students registered in the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). Over 1,500 apprentices who started in RAP are currently continuing in a regular apprenticeship program. Another 487 students who were in RAP have gone on to become certified in their trade.
- Generated 71% of Interprovincial Standards (Red Seal) examinations through the apprenticeship Interprovincial Computerized Examination Management System (ICEMS), to improve the efficiency of the production and administration of Red Seal trade examinations across Canada.
- Provided interprovincial mobility by issuing Red Seal trade certificates to 4,643 tradespersons, up from 4,306 in 2002. The Red Seal allows mobility in designated trades across Canada through recognition of trade certificates among participating provinces.
- Reviewed 3,348 prior learning assessment and qualification certificate applications, up from 3,037 a year ago.
- Certified 603 people through the Qualification Certificate Program, which recognizes prior work experience, knowledge and skills in designated trades and occupations in Alberta.
- Completed almost 800 additional transfer agreements among post-secondary institutions in Alberta.
- Issued 2,754 international qualifications assessment reports to learners with international credentials, a 25% increase from the previous year.
- Negotiated and signed an agreement with the Northwest Territories for the International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) to provide assessment services to their residents with international credentials.
- Completed a study on employment and educational outcomes for learners with international credentials and published the results and recommendations in the IQAS Outcomes Survey report.
- Released the *Survey of Post-secondary Applicants not Attending Report* on students who applied for post-secondary studies but did not attend, indicating that the extent of unmet demand within Alberta's post-secondary system is lower than Alberta's Duplicate Application Detection project indicated.
- Supported community programs which helped 48,316 participants address a personal learning goal, or work to improve their basic literacy, English as a second language or employability skills through Community Adult Learning Councils and volunteer tutor adult literacy programs.
- Provided settlement services and English as a Second Language assessment services to over 15,000 new immigrants through immigrant serving agencies.
- Developed a methodology for high school to post-secondary transition rate, a new core measure in the Ministry's 2004-07 Business Plan.

**Strategy 2C: Enhance accessibility and promote consistent practices of learning programs for all students.**

- Passed Bill 1, the *Alberta Centennial Education Savings Plan Act*, which sets the stage for a new program that will encourage parents to open a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) for their children with a $500 per child investment from government.
- Implemented an Apprenticeship Tuition Fee Policy and monitoring system to ensure that technical training costs are predictable and manageable for apprentices while at the same time maintaining high quality and up-to-date training. Apprentices who demonstrate need may qualify for grants to help pay for tuition, books, supplies and living expenses.
- Established a new Tuition Fee Policy to ensure predictable and manageable tuition increases at post-secondary institutions.
- Awarded $10 million in Performance Envelope funding to 24 post-secondary institutions in recognition of outstanding performance in areas such as graduate employment and satisfaction, increasing accessibility, reducing administration expenditures and generating enterprise revenue.
- Provided approximately $84.4 million in loan relief benefits and completion payments to reduce student debt levels. The Alberta Student Loan Relief Benefit and the Loan Relief Completion Payment continued to reduce debt for students in their first and final years of study respectively.
- Increased both the number of scholarship recipients and the total amount awarded under the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund. Over 10,600 students received over $22.2 million in scholarships, an increase of over 5%.
- Issued over $14.9 million in Achievement Scholarships to over 12,700 Alberta post-secondary students, an increase of over 10%.
- Designed and implemented Belcourt-Brosseau Métis Awards, International Education Awards – Ukraine, Language in Teacher Education Scholarships and Language Teacher Bursary Program.
- The Alberta Scholarships Program handled approximately 16,000 inquiries from learners, parents and educational institutions.
- Recognized and rewarded 50 of Alberta's Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) students with $1,000 Scholarships.
- Awarded Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Scholarships (valued at $1,000 each) to 168 apprentices.
- Supported eCampus Alberta, providing Alberta's post-secondary students online access to courses offered by institutions throughout Alberta.
- Continued progress towards completion of the Students Finance System Development Project.
- Completed seven Grades 1-12 Special Education Programming Standards Reviews and 13 Early Childhood Services Programming Standards Reviews.
- Provided ongoing production to convert publisher files into Braille format for use by the visually impaired.
- Collaborated in creation of an inter-divisional accessibility working group whose goal is the enhancement of learner capabilities and the removal of barriers to performance within the educational community.
- Expanded access to learning opportunities in rural communities, through Community Adult Learning Council Initiatives, resulting in an additional 6,359 participants in 491 learning opportunities.
- Completed 89% of the 66 recommendations identified in the three-year Special Education Review Implementation Plan.
- Engaged over 6,500 parents and over 7,000 preschool children in family literacy activities through 53 projects of the Parent-Child Literacy Strategy.

**Strategy 3A: Continue to work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders within the learning system.**

- Led a collaborative initiative to develop a Pan-Canadian broadband connectivity plan and to introduce the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) as a replacement for the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP).
- Supported government Cross-ministry Initiatives, providing a leadership role in the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative and the Economic Development Strategy, and making value-added contributions to the Health Sustainability Initiative, Aboriginal Policy Initiative, Service Alberta, Information Technology Strategy, Alberta Corporate Service Centre and the Human Resource Development Strategy.
- In conjunction with Statistics Canada, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and other provincial and territorial governments, released the *Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 2003.*
- Transferred two schools from Grande Yellowhead Regional Division to Living Waters Catholic Regional Division to address changes in student enrolment.
- Participated on the Joint Policy Coordination Committee (JPCC) meetings and worked in partnership with Alberta Infrastructure to plan, evaluate, and develop school capital plans, programs, policies and legislation.
- Approved the cross-ministry *Policy Framework for Services for Children and Youth with Special and Complex Needs and their Families* in July 2003. Provided cross-sector and ministry orientation sessions on the *Framework* and *Information Sharing Guideline* to over 400 participants.
- Developed a cross-ministry tracking system, in collaboration with Children's Services and Health and Wellness, as part of the implementation of Policy Direction #1 under the *Framework* to support regional integrated case management team reviews as well as provide data on the needs of children/youth with complex needs and the nature and costs of the services provided by the various service sectors.
- Contributed to the cross-ministry Service Delivery Working Group for the Mental Health Framework.
- Completed revisions to the Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution handbook.
- Completed revisions to the Young Offender Protocol to reflect the new *Youth Criminal Justice Act.*
- Assumed lead for the day-to-day management of the Student Health Initiative, with support from Children's Services and Health and Wellness.
- Conducted a cross-ministry review of the Student Health Initiative and began implementation of the recommendations.
- Prepared a Provincial Report on the first three years of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement.
- Reviewed local strategies with school superintendents for improving student achievement in priority schools, promoting continuous improvement, and Credit Enrolment Units (CEU) funding requirements.
- Reviewed and approved Alberta Home and School Councils' Association's 2003/04 Annual Plan and 2002/03 Annual Results Report, as required by the Conditional Grant Agreement to ensure accountability requirements are being met.
- Provided liaison between the department and the regional consortia to facilitate effective implementation of new/revised curricula.
- Developed implementation plans for recommendations assigned to the Implementation Planning Committee – School Councils – Next Steps Report (1999).
- Reviewed Three-Year Education Plans, with school jurisdictions and completed follow up to ensure consistency and compliance with provincial requirements and with the capital and facility plans.
- Reviewed Annual Education Results Reports with school jurisdictions to discuss results and improvement plans.

- Presented information to stakeholders at regional meetings to facilitate effective implementation of the Renewed Funding Framework in school jurisdictions.
- Established the Stakeholder Advisory Committee to facilitate the successful development and implementation of the Accountability Pillar of the Renewed Funding Framework for school jurisdictions.
- Developed and implemented a plan to ensure that student transcripts are monitored at the local level to make certain that students going into Grade 12 have the prerequisite courses necessary to access courses leading to the High School Diploma.
- Commenced first phase of a pilot project to explore delivery improvements for production of educational resource materials.
- Worked in collaboration with other provincial and territorial ministries on the Pan-Canadian Online Learning Portal, officially launched by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. Approval was given by Ministers to fund further work on the portal.
- Worked collaboratively with Alberta Infrastructure to determine the capital priorities for school boards.
- Presented the Chairman's Award of Excellence to five individuals at the Industry Network Workshop to recognize outstanding dedication and commitment to the trades and to the principles of apprenticeship through many years of service in the industry committee network.
- Led and supported activities to promote standardization, recognition and mobility of trades across Canada through the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA), Interprovincial Alliance of Apprenticeship Board Chairs (IPA), the Interprovincial Computerized Examination Management System (ICEMS) and the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF).
- Worked with industry partners and other government departments to forecast employment supply and demand in the trades and develop strategies to address skilled trades shortages.
- Started collaborations with the Construction Sector Council and other partners to develop construction supply and demand information regionally and across the country.
- Held a workshop to strengthen the network of industry committees and developed an action plan to enhance the effectiveness of the committees. Members of the network recommend standards for training and certification and identify changes in training, enabling the apprenticeship and industry training system to be timely, up to date and responsive to the labour market and economy.
- Completed a program review of Career and Technology Studies (CTS) and implemented a prerequisite monitoring plan. Developed an electronic database system that verifies CTS/CEU claims to ensure that prerequisites are in place for failed or withdrawn CTS courses.
- Consulted with owners of private institutions offering vocational programs licensed under the *Private Vocational Schools Act* regarding the security requirements associated with licensed programs.
- Developed strategies, in collaboration with Economic Development, to support Alberta's transition to a knowledge-based economy.
- In collaboration with the federal government and Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC), developed recommendations for improvements to student financial assistance, promoting accessible and affordable post-secondary education.
- Completed strategic planning sessions with Grande Prairie Regional College.
- Completed a review of enrolment management processes at Lethbridge Community College.
- Completed consultations on roles and responsibilities within the post-secondary system and incorporated changes into the *Post-secondary Learning Act.*

- Developed a priority list, in collaboration with Alberta Infrastructure, which identified the capital projects for 2004-07 for post-secondary institutions, as part of the overall Government Capital Planning Initiative.
- In collaboration with Alberta Human Resources and Employment, handled over 144,000 inquiries from clients and delivery partners through the Student Funding Contact Centre, resulting in a significant reduction in the average wait time for callers. Approximately 90,000 of these inquiries were related to student assistance programs for post-secondary studies.
- Signed Memorandum of Understanding to establish Alberta-British Columbia Protocol for Cooperation and Development – Acquisition and Delivery of Learning Resources.
- Negotiated with the Federal Government to have Alberta's interests and priorities reflected in federal immigration policy and programs.

**Strategy 3B: Promote financial sustainability of the learning system.**

- In support of affordable learning opportunities, processed over 144,000 applications for student loans, scholarships, and loan relief payments from more than 96,000 clients, an increase of 15.7% applicants.
- Developed an action plan to address prerequisite monitoring for Career and Technology Study courses as requested by the Auditor General.
- Redeveloped financial systems to accept the Renewed Funding Framework and recommendations from the Alberta Commission on Learning.
- Reviewed emergency preparedness and implemented a Business Resumption Plan for the Ministry.
- Announced and provided a one-time funding allocation of $20 million to enable school jurisdictions to purchase learning resources through the Learning Resources Centre.
- Assisted post-secondary institutions with one-time operations and maintenance grants of $30 million.
- Acted on the recommendations of Alberta's Commission on Learning by providing $37 million for increases in funding for students with severe special needs, a return to credit-based funding for Grade 10 students, and other costs identified by the Commission. Also provided $2.7 million to address needs in school jurisdictions that have experienced large enrolment declines.

**Strategy 3C: Ensure Albertans have timely, accurate and relevant information about the learning system.**

- Posted the annual Curriculum Handbooks and Summaries for parents on Alberta Learning's website in both English and French.
- Reported results of the 2002/03 surveys of the public, adult learners, parent and high school students and conducted the 2003/04 surveys.
- Launched the Accountability Pillar for the Kindergarten to Grade12 system, including provincial surveys of school board members, Grade 4, 7 and 10 students and their parents and teachers. In total more than 270,000 surveys were distributed.
- Developed the Rutherford Scholarship measure for school jurisdictions as part of the Accountability Pillar.
- Sought input and shared information about LearnAlberta.ca with stakeholders to increase awareness about LearnAlberta.ca at events throughout the year (including focus groups, stakeholder sessions, conferences, teacher and specialist council events, etc.).
- In partnership with Alberta Human Resources and Employment, upgraded the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website to provide timely, accurate and relevant information about the learning system.

- Posted the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board 2002/2003 Annual Report on the Trade Secrets website.
- Number of visitors to the Students Finance and Scholarships & Bursaries sections of the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website increased by approximately 38% and 32% respectively.
- Led the development of strategies under the Raising Awareness About Planning for Post-secondary Studies initiative to promote the long-term benefits of post-secondary education and enhance knowledge of parents and learners about planning for post-secondary studies.
- Worked collaboratively with Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA) to raise parental awareness about planning for post-secondary studies.
- Completed and distributed the Regional Profiles website to post-secondary institutions, making vital information on the province's regions such as student enrollment, population and demographics, available to institutions, the media and the general public.
- Conducted the first consolidated satisfaction and employment survey of post-secondary students.
- Worked with school jurisdictions, public post-secondary institutions, the Ministry of Finance and the Auditor General to discuss the impact of expanding the financial reporting entity to include school jurisdictions and public post-secondary institutions.
- Conducted a satisfaction survey of employers of learning system graduates, including high school, apprenticeship, diploma, certificate and degree graduates.
- Shared information with Albertans on new initiatives, programs and developments in the learning system through a variety of communication tools, including news releases, fact sheets and the department's website.

**Strategy 3D: Develop long-term human resource capacity for the learning system and department.**

- Developed 2003-06 Human Resources Plan with a focus on the goals of work-life balance, leadership development and continuity and continuous learning.
- Implemented the use of the Operational Plan Database System (OPDS) to link individual performance plans with Operational Plans.

# Endnotes for Results Analysis

## Endnote A: Notes on Surveys

**Public/Client Surveys**

Alberta Learning regularly commissions telephone surveys of random samples of the Alberta public and key client groups. The purpose of these surveys is to obtain perceptions of how the learning system is performing in meeting learners' and society's needs and expectations. Professional survey research firms are contracted to conduct the surveys for Alberta Learning, using trained interviewers and the Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. Survey results are compiled by the survey research firms and provided to Alberta Learning.

The following table provides sampling information about the surveys of Albertans conducted for Alberta Learning in recent years that are reported in this 2003/04 Annual Report. The information includes the respondent groups surveyed, corresponding sample sizes and the confidence intervals for results from each survey. Results are considered accurate within the confidence interval 19 times out of 20 (i.e., at a confidence level of 95%). Sampling variation can account for observed differences in results from year to year.

**Alberta Learning Public/Client Surveys: Sample Sizes and Confidence Intervals**

| Survey | | 1999/00 | 2000/01 | 2001/02 | 2002/03 | 2003/04 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public (re ECS – 12 system)[1] | Sample | 2,008 | 2,154 | 1,171 | 2,012 | 2,003 |
| | Confidence interval | ±2.2% | ±2.2% | ±2.9% | ±2.2% | ±2.2% |
| Public (re the adult learning system) [1] | Sample | 3,000 | 3,001 | 1,171 | 3,109 | 3,000 |
| | Confidence interval | ±1.8% | ±1.8% | ±2.9% | ±1.8% | ±1.8% |
| - Adult Learners[2] | Sample | 992 | 998 | 420 | 1,103 | 1,000 |
| | Confidence interval | ±3.2% | ±3.1% | ±4.8% | ±2.9% | ±3.1% |
| - Adults not participating in learning[2] | Sample | 2,008 | 2,003 | 751 | 2,006 | 2,000 |
| | Confidence interval | ±2.2% | ±2.2% | ±3.6% | ±2.2% | ±2.2% |
| Graduates of Apprenticeship Programs[3] | Sample | -- | 2,948 | -- | 3,221 | -- |
| | Confidence interval | -- | ±1.8% | -- | ±1.7 % | -- |
| Employers | Sample | | -- | 2,003 | -- | 2,000 |
| | Confidence interval | N/A[4] | -- | ±2.2% | -- | ±2.2% |

**Notes:**

1. In 1999/2000 and subsequent years Alberta Learning commissioned a survey of the public that captured opinions on both the ECS – 12 and adult learning systems. The general public was over sampled in all years except 2001/02, increasing the number of respondents providing opinions to obtain the desired sample quotas of adult learners (1,000) and adults who had not taken any education or training (2,000). The sample size was smaller in 2001/02 because of the teachers' labour action.
2. Adult learners are a subset of the public. Adult learners are defined as adult Albertans who have participated in a credit or non-credit course in Alberta in the last 12 months prior to the survey. Adults not participating in learning are those adult Albertans who have not participated in a credit or non-credit course in the past 12 months. Measures of public satisfaction with the adult learning system in this report (pages 21, 34 and 36) are the weighted average satisfaction levels of adult learners and adults not participating in learning.
3. The confidence intervals for the apprenticeship graduate surveys are small compared to those for the survey of the public re the adult learning system as they are drawn from relatively small populations (i.e., the pool of apprenticeship graduates – just over 4,000 each year) while the public survey re the adult learning system is drawn from a large population (i.e., adult Albertans – more than 2 million people).
4. Although the employer survey was conducted in 1999/2000, the sample size and confidence interval are not applicable, as the question reported was added to the survey starting in 2001/02. In 2001/02, 797 of the 2,003 employers responding had hired recent graduates, and in 2003/04, 760 of the 2,000 employers responding had hired recent graduates.

The survey instruments for these surveys use four-point response scales ("Very satisfied/Satisfied/ Dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied" or "Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree"), depending on the question. Although not asked, "Don't Know" responses and refusals are recorded as well. Results presented are the combined percentages of respondents who were "very satisfied/satisfied" or who "strongly agreed/agreed".

The public/adult learner survey is conducted every year. The surveys of employers and of apprenticeship graduates are conducted every other year. The survey results are available online at www.learning.gov.ab.ca/department/satisfaction/EmployerSurveyReport.pdf. Apprenticeship graduates are surveyed between six and eighteen months after completing their program. For information on the results of the apprenticeship graduates survey, contact the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Division at 427-8768.

**Alberta Learning Surveys of Partners and Stakeholders**

Each year, Alberta Learning commissions telephone surveys of partners and stakeholders. For the purpose of these surveys, partners are representatives of other Alberta government ministries that have worked with Alberta Learning on specific projects during the last 12 months, and stakeholders are representatives of learning system organizations. Some of these organizations are specifically established by legislation, and all have as their mandate a broad and dedicated interest in the learning system.

These surveys use a judgment sampling (a type of non-probability sampling method, for which confidence intervals are not applicable) and are conducted with partner and stakeholder representatives to obtain perceptions about their working relationships with Alberta Learning staff. The partner and stakeholder surveys capture all major projects in which partners in other ministries worked with Alberta Learning staff and all major stakeholder organizations that have an on-going relationship with the Ministry. Respondents are selected with broad input from senior Ministry staff. Stakeholder selection identifies individuals in senior positions in their organizations who have a broad understanding of the learning system and are in the best position to provide meaningful responses. Samples include representatives of the largest post-secondary institutions and school jurisdictions in the province because of their impact on significant numbers of learners. The table below indicates the number of partner and stakeholder representatives surveyed each year.

**Partner and Stakeholder Surveys: Sample Sizes**

| Year | Partners | Stakeholders | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1999/00 | 38 | 14 | 52 |
| 2000/01 | 33 | 28 | 61 |
| 2001/02 | 35 | 28 | 63 |
| 2002/03 | 43 | 29 | 72 |
| 2003/04 | 42 | 40 | 82 |

From 1999/2000 to 2001/02, the survey instrument used five-point response scales with a neutral midpoint (e.g., Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). Starting in 2002/03, four-point scales with no neutral midpoint were used, to be consistent with other Ministry surveys (e.g., Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). The change from a five-point scale with a neutral midpoint to a four-point scale may have affected the results for 2002/03 and 2003/04 slightly. Results shown are the percentages of all respondents who "strongly agreed/agreed" to the survey question (i.e., the weighted average).

The small samples for these surveys may contribute to variation in survey results from year to year. To illustrate the effect of sample size, each respondent in a survey sample of 100 accounts for one percent (1.0%) of the overall result, whereas each respondent in a survey of 1,000 respondents accounts for only one-tenth of one percent (0.1%) of the overall result.

**Post-secondary Graduates Survey**

Surveys are conducted every other year of graduates of publicly funded post-secondary institutions two years after graduation. For the 2003/04 survey, 15,622 interviews were conducted with 2001/02 graduates from 25 Alberta post-secondary institutions. For smaller institutions, a census survey method, which attempts to obtain responses from all graduating students, was used. The larger institutions used a sampling method which was designed to achieve a confidence level of 95%. Response rates by sector for the 2003/04 survey are presented in the table below.

**Response Rates for the 2003/04 Graduate Outcomes Survey**

| Survey | Universities | Colleges | Technical Institutes | Private University Colleges | System Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2001/02 Graduates | 53% | 56% | 54% | 70% | 55% |

**Note:** The targeted number of responses was set to achieve a 95% confidence level, by institution, with a ±5% confidence interval (or better). The targeted number of responses, by field of study, were set to achieve a 95% confidence level, with a ± 5% confidence interval (or better), for each field of study across each of the following types of institutions: all universities combined, all university colleges combined, all colleges combined, all technical institutes combined.

The 2003/04 survey used a five-point scale (fully satisfied, somewhat satisfied, neutral, somewhat dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied categories). Satisfaction levels reported are the combined percentages of respondents who were "fully satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied." "No Responses" were excluded. The survey instrument is from the Graduate Outcomes Survey, conducted between January and April of 2004 by an independent third-party contractor, on 2001/02 graduates of publicly funded post-secondary institutions. The question set used is in the *Key Performance Indicators Reporting Manual for Alberta's Post-Secondary Institutions*, available online at www.aecd.gov.ab.ca/software/.

In 2003/04, only graduates of parchment programs (i.e., certificate, diploma and degree programs) were surveyed on the new combined satisfaction and employment survey, and the survey was administered two years after the graduation year (2001/02). Previous graduate satisfaction surveys (on 1998/99 and 2000/01 graduates) were exit surveys, conducted at the time of graduation, and included graduates of preparatory and basic upgrading programs as well as graduates of parchment programs. These were excluded as the new survey focuses on outcomes of graduates of post-secondary-level programs. Another significant difference was that the 2003/04 survey was coordinated by Alberta Learning to ensure consistent implementation of the survey among all participating post-secondary institutions, using a common survey method and timeframe. In previous graduate survey administrations, the colleges and technical institutes conducted their own surveys and reported the results to Alberta Learning through the Key Performance Indicator Reporting System (KPIRS), while the surveys of university graduates were centrally coordinated. The results of the previous surveys were reported in Alberta Learning's Annual Report (see Alberta Learning's 2002/03 Annual Report) a year after the survey was conducted, while the results of the 2003/04 survey were available to Alberta Leaning to report in the year in which it was conducted. As a consequence of these major changes in survey methodology, results of the 2003/04 survey are not comparable to results of previous surveys.

**Use of Confidence Intervals for Results of Surveys in Alberta Learning's Annual Report**

When a result is obtained by surveying a random sample of the target population (e.g., the public, adult learners, apprenticeship graduates, employees), there is a confidence interval associated with the result, which is expressed as a percentage above and below the obtained result. A confidence interval indicates how much variation one might expect from the obtained survey result, as a consequence of sampling and diversity among respondents. Difference in survey results over time or among respondent groups on the same survey question are reported at the ".05 level of confidence" (i.e., the same results would be obtained in repeated surveys 19 times out of 20).
Alberta Learning uses confidence intervals to determine:

- whether differences in survey results over time are likely the result of sampling variations, or represent actual change; and
- whether differences among respondent groups to the same question are likely the result of sampling variations or represent actual differences.

When comparing results of survey questions over time or among respondent groups, there is an actual difference between two survey results, 19 times out of 20, if there is no overlap between the confidence intervals of the two observed values. When this is the case, it is acknowledged in the related text that there is an increase, change, or significant difference in survey results over time or among groups. When the confidence intervals of the two observed values do overlap, the observed difference will be due to sampling variation 19 times out of 20, and we cannot conclude that the difference is real (i.e., "significant"). In such cases, the related text indicates that results are similar or stable over time or among groups.

The following hypothetical examples illustrate:

a) two survey results where the confidence intervals overlap and, consequently, it is concluded that there is no real difference between the two survey results, and

b) two survey results where the confidence intervals do not overlap and, consequently, it is concluded that there is a real difference between the two survey results.

a) Where two survey results are 76% and 80%, both with a confidence interval of 2.5%, then the upper limit of the confidence interval for the "76%" result is 78.5%, and the lower limit of the confidence interval of the "80%" result is 77.5%. Since the confidence intervals "overlap", it cannot be concluded that there is a real difference between the two survey results, as the observed difference could be due to sampling variation.

b) If the two survey results are 74% (with a confidence interval of 2.5%) and 80% (also with a confidence interval of 2.5%), the upper limit of the confidence interval for the "74%" result is 76.5%, and the lower limit of the confidence interval of the "80%" result is 77.5%. Since the confidence intervals "do not overlap," it can be concluded that there is a real difference between the two survey results, as sampling variation alone does not account for the observed difference. In such cases, the related text indicates that there is a significant difference over time (i.e., an increase or decrease) or between groups.

# Endnote B: Technical Note on Assessing Results and Targets and on Use of Trend Lines

### Assessing Results Over Time

Changes in results are assessed over time in the discussion of each measure. A change (increase or decrease) is considered slight if it differs 1-2 percentage points from results of the comparison year(s). As the confidence interval is taken into account in assessing results on survey measures that use a probability sampling method (see Endnote A), the change is considered slight for those measures when the result is 1-2 percentage points different from the comparison year(s) above or below the confidence interval.

### Assessing Targets

Performance targets set expectations for results and are the basis for planning improvements and assessing results. They are an important way to gauge whether the organization is improving or falling behind in obtaining desired results in key areas. Targets clearly establish desired levels of performance to be attained by a certain time. Targets are quantifiable and expressed in numerical terms, such as percentages or ratios. They are used as a key tool to drive, measure, improve and control performance.

Performance on a measure is considered to have met the target if the result is at or above 95% of the target value. For example, if the result is 77% on a measure with a target of 80%, then the target has been met since the performance (77%) represents 96.3% of the target. As another example, if the result on the same measure is 75%, then the target has not been met since 75% represents only 93.8% of the target.

This method of assessing performance represents a high level of achievement in relation to the target, i.e., clearing a hurdle. The 95% rule acknowledges the variability in data as well as the complexities of the learning system. In such an environment, targets are general objectives rather than specific values, and achieving 95% of the target value indicates results are "in the ball park."

The 95% rule is not used to assess achievement of targets for provincial achievement tests, which are administered to students in Grades 3, 6 and 9. It does not apply to the results for students who wrote as that set of results represents the achievement of the students who took the test and there is negligible variability. The rule also does not apply to the results for all students in grade as those results are the minimum possible and under-represent the true results for the population had all students in the grade taken the test. Instead, as a difference of four-tenths of a percentage point (0.4%) is considered significant for these results, targets are considered met if the result is within four-tenths of a percentage point (0.4%) of the target.

### Trend Lines

Trend lines are an aid to interpreting the results for measures reported in the Annual Report. Trend lines augment data interpretation techniques already in use such as the calculation of confidence intervals, which is used to determine the significance of a change between two survey results (either over time, or among groups). Trend lines provide a useful method of understanding the year-to-year fluctuations over the longer term, since most measures have data spanning three or more years. Trend lines shift the focus from smaller year-to-year changes to providing information about the longer-term direction of the data and whether or not it is tracking towards the performance target for the measures with targets.

Comments in the text on results with at least three data points are supported by trend lines. The type of trend line used is selected based on an informed interpretation of the data series underlying the trend line.

Logarithmic trend lines are appropriate for proportional data (i.e., data expressed as percentages of a whole, and therefore ranging between 0% and 100%), such as the performance measures in this report. A logarithmic trend line is a best-fit straight line that is most useful when the rate of change in the data increases or decreases quickly, then levels out. The leveling out can be seen in the results for some measures in the report, along with examples of year-to-year increases or decreases on other measures.

A logarithmic trend line is calculated using the following formula:

$Y = c \ln x + b$ where $c$ and $b$ are constants, and $n$ is the natural logarithm function.

# Endnote C: Methodology for Performance Measures

**Provincial Achievement Tests**

Students in Grades 3, 6 and 9 write provincial achievement tests annually in language arts and mathematics while Grade 6 and 9 students also write tests in science and social studies. The achievement test results for Grades 3, 6 and 9 provide information on how well students are meeting provincial standards in the core academic subjects. Tests are developed and administered by educators and are based on expectations in the provincial curriculum. Results are reported in relation to the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence. A student achieving the acceptable standard in a specific grade shows an adequate understanding of the core knowledge and adequate basic skills essential to that course. A student achieving the standard of excellence consistently shows a deeper understanding of the concepts of the course – an ability to integrate information and evaluate it from various points of view. For each achievement test, the cut scores for the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence are set initially by a standard-setting committee of about 20 teachers using the Modified Angoff Standard Setting Procedure. This procedure uses teachers' judgment to determine how many items a student must answer correctly to achieve each standard. In subsequent years, the cut scores for each test are adjusted through test equating. This ensures that the standards remain constant even if test difficulty varies slightly from year to year. Whenever curriculum is revised, the standard-setting process is done again.

Given the large number of students in each grade, approximately 40,000, differences in results from year to year of more than 0.4 percentage points on each test are considered significant. Results on provincial achievement tests are calculated and presented in two ways:

- on the basis of student writing the achievement tests in Grades 3, 6 and 9 who achieved the standards; and
- on the basis of total enrolment in each grade who demonstrated the standards.

Not all students write the provincial achievement tests. Achievement test results are not available for students who were absent, who were excused from writing by the superintendent (because participation would be harmful to the student, or the student could not respond to the test instrument), who wrote but whose results were withheld, or who wrote only one part of a language arts test. It is possible that some of these students, under different circumstances, could have demonstrated achievement of standards on the test. Participation rates are calculated by dividing the number of students who wrote the test by the sum of total enrolment in grade plus the ungraded students who are in the corresponding year of schooling.

Provincial combined results present the unweighted averages based on percentages achieving standards as the populations are relatively stable from year to year and grade to grade. Test results and participation are recorded and aggregated in Ministry systems. Provincial, school authority and school results *(Achievement Test Multi-Year Reports 2000-2004)*, are available on Alberta Learning's website at: www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/default.asp.

**Diploma Examinations**

Examinations are administered in all diploma examination courses in January, June and August each year. Examinations are administered in three courses in both November and April, for a total of six courses. Results on diploma examinations show how well students are meeting provincial expectations as outlined in the Programs of Study. Examination items are developed and cut scores established by committees of teachers. The examination design is vetted through committees of stakeholders, and by a standard-setting committee of teachers.
In order to maintain consistent examination standards over time, a test equating initiative is being phased in for the Diploma Examination Program. Starting in the 2003/04 school year with Social Studies 30 and 33, the multiple-

choice portion of the examinations contains a set of items common to administrations in subsequent years. By comparing the achievement of students writing in January 2004 with those writing in any subsequent administration on the common items, Alberta Learning is able to determine whether or not the examinations were of equal difficulty. Student scores on the subsequent examinations can then be equated back to the January 2004 baseline examinations to remove any influence that differences in examination difficulty may have on student scores. Through equating, all students, regardless of which examination they have written, receive multiple-choice test scores that are based on an identical standard and, consequently, the test results can be directly compared over time.

Diploma examination results are reported in relation to the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence. A student achieving the acceptable standard demonstrates that s/he has met the basic requirements of the course. A mark of 50 per cent on the examination represents the acceptable standard in a diploma examination course. A mark of 80 per cent on the examination represents the standard of excellence and indicates that the student has demonstrated performance significantly beyond the minimum requirements of the course.

For student marks in diploma examination courses, the diploma examination mark is worth 50 per cent of the final mark in a course and the school-awarded mark contributes the other 50 per cent.

The table "Percentages of Grade 12 Students Completing Diploma Examination Courses in their Third Year of High School" reports the percentage of Grade 12 students who received a final mark in each diploma examination course for the last five years. This information is an indicator of participation, as the course enrolment is representative of the group of students who typically take the course. The proportion of Grade 12 students completing diploma examination courses varies from year to year and from school to school depending on course enrolments and student success in achieving course requirements.

Diploma examination results and participation in diploma examination courses are recorded and aggregated in Ministry systems. The provincial reports (*The Diploma Examination Multiyear Reports 2000-2004)* are available online at: www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/multipublic/dip/. These multi-year reports contain five years' of data extracted each year from live systems, which are updated regularly. As a result of the updating on line, the prior years' results in the multi-year reports may differ from prior years' results in the Annual Report.

**High School Completion Rate**

The high school completion rate reports the percentages of Alberta students who, within three, four, and five years of entering Grade 10:

- received a high school diploma, equivalency diploma (GED) or Integrated Occupational Program (IOP) certificate; or
- entered an Alberta post-secondary institution or an apprenticeship program; or
- earned credits in five Grade 12 courses, including one language arts diploma examination course and three other diploma examination courses.

The tracking of Grade 10 students excludes some groups of students, such as a few categories of severe special needs and students whose education is not the responsibility of the provincial government. Data for this measure are from Alberta Learning systems, adjusted for attrition using estimates from Statistics Canada's *Annual Demographic Statistics, 2003* (CD-ROM). A detailed description of the methodology and high school completion rates for Alberta school jurisdictions are available online at www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/completion/.

**Apprenticeship Completion Rate**

The methodology used for arriving at the apprenticeship completion rate is based on tracking apprentices who have successfully completed all the work experience and formal training requirements for their first period of apprenticeship or who have received credit for prior learning or work experience for that year. These apprentices are tracked from the beginning of their second year, when significant public funds begin to be expended on their formal instruction, and are tracked for two years beyond the expected length of their trade program to determine completion. Only trade programs of at least two years in length are included since tracking begins in an apprentice's second year. Most trade programs are four years in length.

The *Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act* stipulates that no one can be employed in certain occupations without either being a journeyman or an apprentice. Since apprenticeship registration is often a condition of employment, individuals may register as apprentices even though they may not intend to complete their program. Tracking apprentices starts in their second year, which reduces the cohort in recognition of those who register as a condition of employment but do not intend to complete. Other factors may affect program completion times, such as apprentices being laid off work, choosing to delay their technical training at the request of employers or for personal reasons. Given these employment conditions and factors affecting completion, two additional years is considered to be a reasonable length of time for apprentices to complete their programs. For example, the majority of apprentices in four-year programs would be expected to complete their programs within six years.

Data are from the Skilled Trades Information System (STIS) maintained by the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Division of Alberta Learning.

**Interim Post-secondary Completion Rate**

The interim post-secondary completion rate is based on tracking first-year, full-time career and undergraduate students in parchment programs (i.e., certificate, diploma and bachelor degree programs) at public post-secondary institutions. Students are tracked for the program length (typically one year for certificate, two years for diploma and four years for degree programs) plus three years in the institution where they entered as a first-time, full-time student. Three additional years are provided to account for a variety of circumstances, such as change in program, discontinuous enrolment, cooperative programs (alternate periods of work and study) and reduced course loads. Data for these calculations are extracted from the Learner Enrolment Registration system when data for the previous academic year are complete. Students in graduate programs, university transfer programs and applied degree programs are excluded.

Interim post-secondary completion rates for institutions have been aggregated into two categories: university completion which tracks students in four-year undergraduate degree programs and college/technical institution completion which tracks students in certificate and diploma programs (usually up to two years of study). The university category includes Alberta College of Art & Design's programs, all of which are four-year undergraduate degree programs. Athabasca University is not included in the completion rate due to the lack of comparability between a distance-delivery institution and traditional campus-based universities. Also excluded from this interim completion rate are the private university colleges, as there is not yet sufficient information to generate a completion rate for these institutions.

This interim completion rate methodology is unable to track students who start at one institution but transfer to another institution. As a result, transfer students (both those who complete and those who do not) are counted as

non-completers. Alberta Learning is currently implementing an Alberta Student Number (ASN) for post-secondary students that would allow for a more accurate calculation of completion rates within the post-secondary system, including tracking of transfer students.

**Educational Attainment**

The Labour Force Survey is a monthly Canada-wide survey of a representative sample of households. Data are collected about all members of the household who are 15 years of age or older. The high school and post-secondary completion rates for 25-34 year-olds are presented as they represent recent outputs of Alberta's learning system.

The Canadian sample size for the monthly Labour Force Survey has been approximately 54,000 households over the reporting period. Alberta's sample size corresponds to its share of the population. In 2003, between 5,375 and 5,507 Alberta households were surveyed each month (an average of 5,425 per month), with information provided on between 10,493 and 10,807 individuals per month (an average of 10,634 per month). Excluded from the Labour Force Survey are persons living on Indian reserves, inmates of prisons, and members of the military. As these groups (which represent about 2% of the population age 15+) typically have lower education levels than the total population, educational attainment rates based on Labour Force Survey data may be slightly higher than the rate would be for the total population age 15+.

The educational attainment rates presented are annual aggregates for the calendar year. The coefficient of variation, or CV, (the standard error as a percentage of the reported result) for the Labour Force Survey is 1.0% for both the Alberta and the Canadian data. Additional information on the Labour Force Survey methodology and interpreting CVs is available on pages 16-23 of *Guide to the Labour Force Survey*, Catalogue no. 71-543-GIE (Revised, February 2004), available on-line from Statistics Canada: www.statcan.ca.

**Participation in Early Childhood Services (ECS) Programs**

The participation rate in ECS programs is the percentage of all Alberta Grade 1 students in the current school year who had an Alberta ECS registration in any prior school year. The calculation is adjusted to account for Grade 1 students who entered Alberta from another province or country in the previous year, and thus would not have attended ECS in Alberta. In-migration data include the estimated number of immigrants and of interprovincial in-migrants aged five as of July 1st of the calendar year. The Grade 1 and ECS registration data are from the Corporate Data Warehouse maintained by Information Services, Alberta Learning and extracted in April each year. The in-migration data are from Statistics Canada, *Annual Demographic Statistics, 2003* (CD-ROM).

**High School to Post-secondary Transition Rate**

The High School to Post-secondary Transition Rate reports the percentages of Alberta students who, within four and six years of starting Grade 10:

- attended a credit program, part-time or full-time, in an Alberta post-secondary institution; or
- registered in an apprenticeship program other than the Registered Apprenticeship Program, which is a program for high school students.

The High School to Post-secondary Transition Rate includes adjustments for attrition and for attending post-secondary institutions out of province, based on estimates.

Students whose education is not the responsibility of the provincial government, as well as students who are identified as having cognitive disabilities or a severe multiple disability are not included in the High School to Post-secondary Transition Rate.

The sources of student data are Alberta Learning's Student Information System (SIS), Student Records System (SRS), Skilled Trades Information System (STIS), and the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer's Duplicate Application Detection System (DAD). The estimate of attrition uses data from Statistics Canada, *Annual Demographic Statistics*. The estimate of Alberta students attending post secondary institutions out-of-province uses aggregate student counts from Alberta Learning's Learner Enrolment Reporting System (LERS) and Students Finance System (SFS).

**Employment Rates of Albertans 25-34 by Educational Attainment**

Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey is a monthly Canada-wide survey of a representative sample of households. Data are collected about all members of the household who are 15 years of age or older. Excluded from the Labour Force Survey are persons living on Indian reserves and inmates of prisons. As these groups, which represent less than 2% of the population age 15+, typically have lower employment levels than the total population, employment rates for 25-34 year-olds based on Labour Force Survey data may be slightly higher than the rate would be for the total population of Albertans aged 25-34.

The employment rates for 25-34 year-olds are presented as they represent recent outputs of Alberta's learning system. The employment rates are annual aggregates for the calendar year. The Canadian sample size for the monthly Labour Force Survey has been approximately 54,000 households over the reporting period. Alberta's sample size corresponds to its share of the population. In 2003, between 5,375 and 5,507 Alberta households were surveyed each month (an average of 5,425 per month), with information provided on between 10,493 and 10,807 individuals per month. Of these, about 1,550 – 1,600 individuals each month are age 25-34, or about 19,000 on an annual basis. The coefficient of variation (the standard error as a percentage of the reported result) is 1.0%. Additional information on the Labour Force Survey Methodology and interpreting CV's is available on pages 16-23 of the *Guide to Labour Force Survey*. Catalogue no. 71-543-GIE (Revised, February 2004), available online from Statistics Canada: www.statcan.ca.